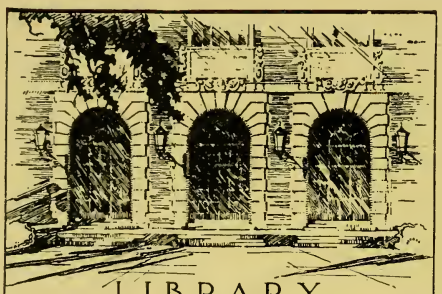

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THE

GENTLEMAN IN DEBT.

A NOVEL.

BY

WILLIAM J. O'NEILL DAUNT, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HUGH TALBOT," "SAINTS AND SINNERS," &c.

"Base is the slave that pays!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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TO

MRS. SCOTT, OF PARTON,

KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE,

The following Tale,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF A PAST PERIOD

IN THE HISTORY OF IRELAND,

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A MARK OF AFFECTIONATE FRIENDSHIP,

BY THE AUTHOR.

KILCASCAN, CO. CORK,
July 30, 1848.

THE

GENTLEMAN IN DEBT.

CHAPTER I.

"Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
By the side of some hoar hill,
Through the green wood echoing shrill."—MILTON.

I WAS born in 1738, and received the rudiments of my education between the parlour and the stable at Castle Carroll, my father's ancestral abode, in one of the most out-of-the-way regions of the province of Connaught. If my early training did not tend to expand and enlighten my intel-

lectual faculties, I have no reason, at all events, to complain that it was not calculated to enlarge and strengthen my physical proportions. I was early accustomed to "rough it" in all weathers; to follow the hounds from the earliest age I could stick to the back of a horse; to dash into the rapid current of our mountain river, and to try my speed at foot-races with the swiftest of the peasant youths around our dwelling.

I was an only child; and, like all only children, I ran a fair chance of being spoiled by the over-fondness of my mother; if it had not been that my father, from the spirit of contradiction, incessantly counterworked the plans and wishes of his wife.

"O'Carroll, my dear," said my timid parent to her husband, "you expose that poor boy to shocking risks. You should not allow him to ride, unless John holds the leading rein."

"Leading reins and leading strings are only fit for misses," retorted my father;

and then, by way of a practical commentary on that emphatic text, he flung me up on the back of Blue Blazes, a spirited hunter that the groom was leading up at the moment. My mother screamed; my father slashed the horse, exclaiming, "Don't fall off, you rascal, at your peril!" and away I scampered through the country, over hedge and ditch, scarcely conscious whither the fleet steed was bearing me; yet miraculously keeping my seat with a tenacity that excites my surprise when I think of it.

Over Blue Blazes I had but little control; nor can I conjecture where the impetuous and high-mettled animal would have borne me, if, by good fortune, the cry of a pack of hounds had not arrested his instincts on the farther declivity of a hill about three miles from my father's house. He perked up his ears, and, taking the direction of the welcome sounds, bore me safely into the midst of the huntsmen, who were not a little astonished at the

apparition of a boy of fifteen alone, and mounted upon one of the most spirited hunters in the country.

"Well hopped!" exclaimed Sir Hyacinth Blake, in great astonishment, as my steed brought me over an extremely ugly leap in perfect safety; a large, uneven gripe with deep water at the bottom, and a rough, high, stony ditch at the opposite sid ;—"well hopped, my little fellow! You're a famous bold rider, for your years."

I coloured high with delight at this praise, although my pleasure had been greater if the praise had been bestowed by any of the other gentlemen present. I had always felt an indefinite fear of Sir Hyacinth Blake. I knew not why—but I experienced an instinctive shrinking from his eye, from the tones of his voice; I could not assign any reason for this antipathy, other than the excellent one which schoolboys allege for the unpopularity of Doctor Fell.

My father's sporting friends inquired for him, during the interval occupied in drawing a cover at the side of an oak copse. Some of them said they were surprised at his allowing so young a boy as I was to ride out unattended—on a horse of such mettle, too.

"I fancy, youngster," said one of the gentlemen, "that you must have stolen out unknown to your father—eh?"

"No, indeed, sir," answered I, indignant at the supposition; "he threw me up on the saddle, slashed the horse, and off I set."

"Egad," said Captain Bodkin, "the O'Carroll has hit off a novel way of training-in his son and heir."

"Oh," said I with much nonchalance, "Papa does not care if I rode to the devil, provided I brought Blue Blazes home again."

A laugh followed this remark.

"You seem a precocious young gentle-

man," said Bodkin; "pray how does your mother like all this?"

"I am sure I cannot tell," said I, "nor is it of much consequence. Papa says that women have no business to control boys."

At this moment our attention was called off to the glorious fact that the fox had broken cover; he was a large old dog-fox of surpassing amplitude of brush, and of experience sharpened by the memory of many a hard run.

The man who has not enjoyed a good fox-hunt in a first-rate sporting country can, at best, be said to know but half the blessings of human existence. Those only who have tasted that exquisite enjoyment can properly appreciate the sustained ecstacy—I can call it by no other name—which thrills and animates the soul from the first entapis of the fox, through his well and warily run course, to the glorious and inspiriting termination of the chase—the death.

The fox, when he broke cover, dashed directly towards a large wood in which there was a considerable undergrowth of hollies and other sylvan brushery; but of course he found retreat cut off, the earths having all been carefully stopped the previous night. At first he gained considerably on the hounds; who, when they reached the wood, were perplexed by touching on the drag of another fox, which brought them to check for several minutes. None but the enthusiastic fox-hunter can form a conception of the breathless anxiety of such an interval; the eagerness with which the movements of the more experienced hounds are watched, until—ecstatic moment!—the scent is recovered, and away we all go in full pursuit once more, cheered onwards by the soul-stirring music of the hounds; and inhaling health, happiness, and animation from the fresh and bracing breeze!

The hounds, then, had recovered the scent in the wood, when one of our sharp-

sighted party tallied Reynard at some distance, rather leisurely ascending a hill. The pack held on, in full cry. Right in our way was a long extent of wall, about six feet in height, in which some few gaps had been broken at distant intervals. One of these gaps was in a portion of the wall that enclosed an old churchyard; through which, as it chanced, the scent lay. The horsemen had heretofore kept at the tail of the hounds; but on reaching this spot they found the lane leading to the burial-ground blockaded by a funeral, which had just arrived. The hounds, of course, did not stand on ceremony with the mourners, but followed the scent in full cry across the line of the funeral. The horsemen pulled in, until the procession passed, with the exception of Sir Hyacinth Blake and two or three reckless youths. Sir Hyacinth pursued his headlong course, calling loudly to the people to make way. The crowd suddenly divided, utterly astonished at his gross indecorum, which not only

was insulting to individual feeling, but also was highly offensive to the peculiar prejudices that exist in the minds of the Irish peasantry regarding the reverence to which the remains of their departed relations are entitled. Just as Sir Hyacinth faced his horse at the broken portionfl the churchyard wall, something frightened the animal, who shied, sprung suddenly aside, and in doing so knocked down a young peasant. The youth immediately rose, for he had sustained no injury. He looked up for an instant at the Baronet, as if expecting an apology; but receiving none, his brow darkened, and he muttered some words, of which was only audible the concluding malediction, "You can come to no good end, you savage baste!"

But this expression of his discontent was unheeded by Sir Hyacinth, who leaped the wall, and was now many fields away.

"Shame upon him! to knock down the corpse's own brother, and never so much as to say he was sorry!"

" 'Tis little the likes of *him* cares for the likes of *us;* the rich has no hearts for the poor." These and similar remarks were generally made by the crowd.

" I don't care one straw for his knocking me down," said young Jerry Brien, " for that might be an accident; but the disrespect to *him.*" And he looked mournfully at the coffin as he spoke. " No luck can follow him, neighbours! I feel it borne in upon my heart some way, that that man can't have luck—Nabocklesh!"

The coffin was now committed to the grave; the people returned to their homes, save some few stragglers, whose attendance at the funeral had been prompted merely by a gossipping wish to follow the crowd and hear the news, and who now were enticed by the sound of the horn to join the hunting party, which was not very far in advance, owing to the intervention of a river, which threw the hounds again off the scent. But, ere the sportsmen reached the stream, the career of one of them was awkwardly checked. They had

been going at a full pace, and were approaching a large ditch, on the top of which was a row of old ash trees. Sir Hyacinth's horse was badly mouthed, and his owner had often intended to get rid of him; but he had invariably postponed the execution of this purpose, as the animal was fleet and safe. One of the ash-trees in the ditch now before him sent forth a horizontal branch at just about the height, from the root, of a man on horseback. The ditch, to the left of this branch, was unincumbered with trees for a considerable extent, and the other horsemen had leaped it in perfect safety. Sir Hyacinth thought to follow; but his badly mouthed and unmanageable steed made right for the ash-tree, crossed the ditch at full speed exactly under the horizontal branch; and his rider narrowly escaped with life, by throwing his feet out of the stirrups, and catching with his arms at the branch, to which he clung until released from his awkward situation. It was, of course, im-

possible that he should avoid a severe shock. Bruised and sprained, he was totally unable to resume the day's sport. I was the only one of the horsemen who immediately perceived his disaster; the rest were further on, and too intent on the business of the day to notice it. I contrived, with some difficulty, to check Blue Blazes, and having dismounted, handed him to the care of the next redshank. In another moment I was at the side of the unhorsed baronet. He was much contused, and even felt seriously alarmed for his life. He said he had certainly received a dangerous internal injury.

The delay of the hunt at this moment afforded the more seasoned sportsmen an opportunity to pause and inquire the fate of their companion. As soon as they learned that he had not been killed, they expressed their sympathy in the shape of a rousing execration at all hard-mouthed horses, and immediately rejoined the hounds.

But, as for me, my youthful sympathies were awakened into warmer feeling at the sight of human suffering. Notwithstanding the prejudice, amounting to absolute dislike, which I had ever experienced for Sir Hyacinth, no sooner did I see him stretched upon the ground, writhing with pain, and unable to rise without assistance, than I felt my prejudices melt beneath the influence of charity; and I should have found it impossible to enjoy the day's amusement until I had first ascertained that the sufferer's apprehensions for his life were unfounded. In truth, I now felt an additional interest in Sir Hyacinth, arising from the self-reproaching consciousness of my former hostile sentiments.

He was placed upon a low-backed car, and conveyed to Ballymore, whither I accompanied him; the more readily, as his residence was not much out of my way home.

CHAPTER II.

"*Host.*—Old mother of records,
Thou knows't her pedigree then: whose daughter is she?"—BEN JONSON, *The New Inn.*

SIR HYACINTH seemed rather grateful for the interest I evinced in his behalf; and, on reaching Ballymore, he asked me to remain to dinner.

"Lady Blake and Emily will receive you," said he; "I feel I must go to bed immediately."

I accepted his invitation, and entered the drawing-room, where, as I did not find any of the family, I amused myself by looking at the exquisite paintings it contained, and the rich and costly furniture. I was painfully struck with the contrast these matters afforded to the scanty, well-worn,

poverty-stricken *ménage* at Castle Carroll. Wealth had touched Ballymore with her magic wand—there was perfect finish—there was splendour in every appointment. I thought of my father's old mansion, and sighed; I felt jealous that we should be thus eclipsed beyond all rivalry by a family three or four centuries less ancient in the country than our own.

Tradition averred that a curse hung over the line of Castle Carroll, in consequence of the mode in which, about two hundred years before, our patrimony had been augmented by a certain unscrupulous Milesian virago of the family, Dame Granua Carroll. Availing herself of the various facilities afforded to a bold and reckless chieftainess, this lady added several slices of her neighbour's estates to the property of her son, then a minor, and committed by his deceased father's will to Dame Granua's guardianship. Fraud and force were alike the weapons of her warfare; the powerful were tricked—the weak were bullied and crushed.

At length, early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Dame Granua, then about fourscore, lay upon her death-bed. The parish priest was summoned to administer the last consolations of religion. In the course of a very reluctant and surly confession, the lady was compelled to admit that she had foully defrauded some three or four neighbouring proprietors.

"I am bound to tell you," said the priest, "that, unless you make full restitution to all those injured persons, you have not the least chance of going to heaven."

"And is it in earnest you are?" incredulously asked the venerable plunderer.

"Perfectly in earnest," responded the priest; "and if *you* had but given the smallest concern to religion, you would not now, upon your dying bed, require to be told so. I announce to you plainly that you never will see heaven, unless you give back the estates to their right owners."

"Give back the estates!" ejaculated

Granua, with infinite scorn, "the man's stark mad!"

"You will be damned if you do not," urged the father confessor.

"I'll be d—d if I do!" retorted the *penitent.*

"I am deeply grieved to see you so obdurate at such a moment," said the priest; "but I most solemnly repeat, that damned you will certainly be, if you do not refund."

Dame Granua O'Carroll seemed shaken for a moment. She did not immediately reply; but, soon recovering her obstinate resolve, she turned her face to the wall and her back to the priest. "I have made up my mind," said she. "It is better that one old woman should be damned, than that the chiefs of Hy-Carroll should lack estates. Get agone!"*

The priest, thus dismissed, went away with a groan; declaring to Granua's maid

* This strange tale is told of a lady of the Desmond family.—EDITOR.

(who had witnessed the colloquy) that her mistress would go to the devil. She died that night, and went—the gentle reader may conjecture whither. Her dishonest manœuvres were attended with very little benefit to our temporal interests: we were an unlucky and a spendthrift race. Scarcely a generation passed, that we were not compelled to alienate a portion of our land; and the popular belief ascribed the gradual declension of our fortunes, as well as the individual ill luck of several members of the family, to the avenging Providence aroused by Granua's daring impenitence.

I was thinking of this old tradition, of my father's embarrassments and discomforts, and envying the occupants of Ballymore, whose household contrasted so strongly with ours; when the sound of wheels sweeping rapidly along the avenue disturbed the current of my thoughts, and called my attention to the visitor. In another minute, the Reverend Julius

Blake, Sir Hyacinth's younger brother, had entered the hall, and was instantly apprised by the servants of the baronet's accident.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Julius; "my brother! Injured, you say? where? how? what is the extent of his hurt?" And, without waiting for an answer to his exclamatory queries, Julius rushed at once to the baronet's bedroom, where he made, as I learned, an amazing exhibition of fraternal sympathy. In truth, the display of his sensibility on that occasion was sufficiently dramatic to set the spectators in tears. I heard a blubbering housemaid exclaim to one of the footmen, "It's no use talking, John; but you may walk from this to Dublin without finding the like of his reverence for a tender-hearted gentleman."

Julius remained with his brother until dinner was announced, and then entered the dining-room supporting his lovely niece upon his arm. I was struck with the air

of anxious solicitude apparent in her countenance, which served to enhance her beauty. Nothing could be more reverend than the appearance of her uncle. His high forehead, prematurely bald—for he was not more than thirty years old—imparted a bland and contemplative expression to his countenance: the placid smile, that denoted habitual benevolence, was redeemed from the charge of insipidity by the sparkling intelligence of his hazel eye. The short curled locks that adorned his temples were well powdered; and his tall figure, at once manly and elegant, attired in a clerical habit of black, was well adapted to the personation of a character combining pastoral authority with the polish of the well-bred and accomplished gentleman.

CHAPTER III.

"*Compass.* Here comes our parson,
A venerable youth. I must salute him."
BEN JONSON, *The Magnetic Lady.*

SUCH was the outward man of Julius Blake. His appearance excited my attention in an unusual degree: he perceived that it did so, and seemed pleased at my notice. He addressed to me some feeling remarks upon his brother's accident; then glided into anecdotes of the field and of the turf, which evinced an extensive acquaintance with that fascinating lore; told stories illustrative of animal sagacity, a description of talk invariably amusing to boyhood; and ere the fruit was placed on the table, he had perfectly charmed me with his entertaining powers and his affability.

Whilst I was thus agreeably occupied, between admiring Emily and chattering with her entertaining uncle, several gentlemen were successively announced, who had come to inquire for Sir Hyacinth; amongst these was Dr. M'Grail, the Protestant vicar of the parish—a worthy, benevolent soul, who was universally liked, as his sermons were not long, and he could bear a hand at whist or backgammon when required; to which recommendations he added the substantial qualities of a blameless life, and a readiness to relieve, with either alms or counsel, all the poor of the district who sought his assistance.

"I came to ask how your brother is," said the vicar to Julius, when their first greetings had been exchanged: "Sir Hyacinth is too bold a horseman; I often told him so."

"I bless Providence," said Julius, looking solemnly up, and pressing the hand of the good vicar, "that his hurt is not

likely to be very serious. Dr. Kenrick has seen him, and he says that a fortnight's confinement to the house, and abstinence from violent exercise, for some time after, will be the worst consequences of the accident."

"I hope he is right in that opinion," said the good-natured vicar.

"I hope so, too," said Julius; "there is ONE above, to whose merciful providence we trust for a favourable issue. Pray, gentlemen, help yourselves," continued Julius, pushing round the wine to M'Grail, and the other visitors; "this is excellent wine."

The gentlemen followed Julius's hospitable recommendation, and the talk of the company partook of their mixed lay and clerical character. There was much speculation upon episcopal patronage, and on the probable duration of the lives of old incumbents; politics were talked, and Julius remarked that the mode in which England fomented the jealousies of Pro-

testant and Papist in Ireland, thereby securing her own supremacy over both, reminded him of the fox in the apologue, who decided the claims of the rival monkeys to the oyster, by swallowing the fish himself, and handing a shell to each of the litigants. We then discussed the chance of Lord Killeries' black mare, Mrs. Slammekin, being winner at the Ballybog races; the comparative merits of different fox-covers; and the interest possessed at the Castle by Lord Killeries' brother, the Bishop of ——, who, as Julius said, "had extraordinary patronage, considering that he was an Irishman."*

Some of the friends of Julius had told him that the ease and rapidity with which his enthusiasm transferred itself from grave to gay, from sacred to profane, indicated some inconsistency in the tone of his

* In 1725, Archbishop King wrote that he had ordained Deacon a son of Lord Abercorn's, "who will," says the prelate, "deserve much better preferment, if the original sin of being of Ireland doth not bar him."

mind. Julius denied the charge; he was not inconsistent, he said, but versatile.

"A man cannot serve two masters," said M'Grail.

"My dear vicar, I am sure you are greatly too polite, as well as too charitable, to insinuate that I divide my allegiance between Heaven and the devil."

"My dear Julius," said the vicar, "I only mean to say—pardon me, if I offend—that you seem to have a little too much of the man of the world about you, for a minister of the gospel."

It was impossible to put Julius out of temper, and M'Grail knew it.

"Too much of the man of the world!" echoed the accused party; "pray tell me how?"

"Why, for example, you have horses on the turf."

"Yes," replied Julius, "because I am poor, and wish to earn an honest penny by the superior speed of my quadrupeds. And you call that having too much of the

world about me? I suppose the complaint you made awhile ago, that the bishop had given a living of a thousand a year to Robert Fitzeustace instead of to a certain worthy divine who shall be nameless, had nothing of the world in it? Now, for my part, I think that mammon is mammon; and that there is no more worldliness attaching to mammon acquired through the fleetness of your steed, than to that which you screw from the industry of your reluctant parishioners."

"Why, certainly, when one thinks of such an unfit person as Robert Fitzeustace being given a good living just because he is the bishop's son, one can't avoid a little indignation," said M'Grail, recurring to the subject of his own recent grievances. "'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.' It is a sad thing, this nepotism. How seldom promotion follows real merit!"

"If it did, my dear M'Grail," replied Julius, with great suavity, "you would have long since been a dean at the least."

"I do not aspire so high," said the vicar. "But I *do* think myself more fitted to take charge of such a parish as Ballymacslattery than Robert Fitzeustace."

"The bishop," said Jack Walsh, "is as proud as Lucifer of the talents of his sons."

"Yes," observed Julius, "and the only clever one among them is that same scamp Robert. The bishop had heard, or read, somewhere, that the men most distinguished for genius had been eminently dull and unpromising in their boyhood. So as all the episcopal progeny had unimpeachable claims to the attribute of early dulness, the bishop quietly settled it in his mind that they were destined to astonish the world hereafter as geniuses."

"Strange as it seems," said Walsh, "that scampish Robert has astonishing powers of pulpit eloquence."

"Aye, of a certain description," answered Julius. "I have heard him two or or three times. His forte is mystery and horror. As a pulpit-tragedian he is capi-

tal. His countenance is exceedingly expressive, and helps the effect. He has a remarkable scowl, too, that frightens the women into fits. One part of his secret is, that he does not economise damnation. If you want to *take* with some audiences, damn right and left. There is a morbid feeling that renders it popular."

"Why, surely people don't like to be damned?" said the vicar.

"Oh, every man makes the exception in his own behalf, and applies your damnation to his neighbours. But Bob does more than damn. Bob is oracular. If you would pass for profound, be frequently unintelligible. Announce mysterious and recondite doctrines as essential truths, and back them up with the most obscure and difficult texts you can get. Bob does this; and Bob has got fame, and a following, and imitators—"

"And a good fat parish," added M'Grail with some bitterness, "and Bob will be a dean by and bye, and perhaps a bishop, if

he does nothing unmanageably scandalous. —But all this has nothing to say to your running horses, Julius. We have strayed far a-field from that question. What would Saint Paul say to such a practice? Fancy Saint Paul with a betting book—eh, Julius?"

"Aye," retorted Julius, "or fancy Saint Paul with a liquorish eye to a living of a thousand a year; Saint Paul, who laboured with his hands, rather than be a burthen to his proselytes! Or, fancy him driving about in a smart pony phaeton with a big shovel hat on his head and a livery servant in the rumble, like the Rev. Mr. M'Grail! Or fancy Saint Paul with handsome daughters, and sending his daughters to a dancing school, like the same exemplary vicar! Or fancy him indulging, just as we are now, in social converse over the third magnum of claret.—Why, vicar, if your Pauline argument were worth a straw, it would be fatal to many practices avowedly innocent."

CHAPTER IV.

"Whether a cheerful air does rise,
And elevate her fairer eyes;
Or a pensive heaviness
Her lovely eyelids does depress.
Still the same becoming grace
Accompanies her eye and face;
Still you'd think that habit best,
To which her countenance last was drest."

RICHARD FLECKNOE.

WHEN we repaired to the drawing-room, we found Emily presiding at the tea-table. Her mother remained in close attendance upon Sir Hyacinth. It was strange the influence he exercised over the different members of his family—that stern, unamiable man. His wife had married him for love; he was generally supposed to treat her ill, yet she never complained; and her conduct towards him invariably

appeared to be guided by the warmest attachment. To Emily he had not, indeed, been unkind; he had rather been indifferent and negligent; he was excessively displeased because she was not a boy, and he felt disposed to divide the blame of her unfortunate sex between herself and her mother. She might have perhaps been forgiven for being a girl, if she had had the good fortune of possessing a brother; but of this there seemed no probability. Emily was an only child; and her parents had now been married eighteen years. Yet Emily, sweet and loving as her young heart was, regarded her unloveable father with warm affection.

As to Julius, he had no great reason to confide in the baronet's fraternal love. There was a valuable living in the gift of Sir Hyacinth; the incumbent had died about a year before the time of which I am now writing; Julius very naturally expected that his brother would appoint him; but, to his utter astonishment, Sir

Hyacinth gave it away to a college companion, not celebrated for pastoral qualifications of any kind. This was an act of caprice, on the part of the ill-conditioned baronet, for which he did not condescend to assign any reason. Lady Blake felt mortified and indignant, for she had a great regard for her brother-in-law, whose kind manners contrasted strongly with the habitual moroseness of her husband. Julius had once won her warm heart by defending her with spirit from some charges of failure in conjugal duty preferred by Sir Hyacinth; whose groundless jealousies were the more reprehensible, inasmuch as the irregularities of his own conduct were perfectly notorious.

Whatever disappointment Julius felt at the affair of the advowson, he had the art to suppress his emotions. Galled he well might be. His fortune, as a second son, was scanty; his late father had always looked forward to the family advowson as a permanent provision for him;

and Julius, who never doubted that he would in time be the incumbent, had lived in a style of expense, and incurred debts, for the payment of which he had confidently reckoned on his future tithes. How he eked out his slender income so as to support the style he adopted in Dublin, puzzled some of his country acquaintance. One resource was, undoubtedly, the card table. He played, not very deeply, but for moderate sums, with admirable skill and coolness, and almost invariably rose a winner. But, notwithstanding this resource, Julius Blake's expenses gradually exceeded his means ; and when, at last, the provision he had looked to as assuredly his own was given away to another, it required a high degree of self-control to suppress the natural outbreak of resentful disappointment. All that he was known to utter on the subject was a pious wish that the new incumbent might discharge his pastoral duties with a due sense of the high responsibility of a Christian minister.

"Make your mind easy, my dear fellow, upon that point," said Jack Walsh. "No fear that his pastoral duties will bother him—he has only two Protestant parishioners—the parish clerk and Jerry M'Ilroy, the turn-coat bumbailiff. Egad, I could manage the spiritualities of so small a flock as that, myself. They won't give the parson much trouble, either. The clerk knows what's what, and can take care of his own soul—and as for Jerry M'Ilroy, *he* is probably past praying for."

"Emily, my love," said Julius to his young niece, "you preside so well at the tea-table, that I wish your mother would allow you to return with me to Dublin, to preside at mine. Would you like to come?"

"And see Dublin?" said Emily; "yes, of all things, when papa gets well. Won't you ask mamma to allow me, uncle Julius?"

"Certainly, my love. But will papa permit?"

Emily's face looked blank at this in-

quiry. Her papa was not ordinarily very flexible to requests for indulgence or amusement. Julius rose from his chair, placed his hands upon the head of his lovely niece, and with the sweetest, blandest smile, said—

"We must see what we can do with your papa; I think he could not well contrive to be obdurate. I know if you were *my* daughter, Emily, I could not refuse so slight a contribution to your happiness."

And, stooping as he spoke, he affectionately kissed the fair forehead of his niece, and added, somewhat sentimentally,

"It is really a duty, M'Grail, to promote the innocent enjoyments of the young. Life so soon brings its train of cares and sorrows, that the zest is gone long before our heads are grey." And he stood quite an animated statue of Benevolence, looking blandly around for the sympathy of his hearers in the amiable sentiments he uttered; whilst his fingers played sportively with a curl of Emily's hair.

"Ahem!" coughed Jack Walsh.

"Good, kind-hearted man!" murmured worthy M'Grail.

The good, kind-hearted man continued to converse with Emily; and if he felt a mundane wish for the approbation of the lookers-on, he was perfectly judicious; for there is something apparently indicative of a kind and gentle disposition in attention paid by grown-up persons to misses or masters in their teens. We are apt to imagine that those who take pleasure in the artless, the innocent, and the unsophisticated, must be attracted by the magnetism of a kindred guilelessness. Julius accordingly devoted himself for over an hour to his niece; talked of her flower-knots—of her pet blackbird—and of the new poney-carriage mamma had promised to provide. Then, assuming a serious air, he gravely diverged from mere topics of amusement to the progress of her religious education—asked her to repeat the psalms he had told her when last at Ballymore to

commit to memory—assured her that the only mode in which girls could become good women, and attain eventual happiness, was by a strict attention to the pious lessons of their parents and religious instructors—and finally expressed his own most ardent hope that his sweetest Emily should enjoy not only the felicity afforded by this transitory world, but also the infinitely more important and enduring bliss of the next.

Towards the end of his homily, the rich and mellow voice of Julius became actually tremulous with emotion. The beautiful girl looked up into his face with an expression of intense and somewhat wondering seriousness ; her uncle laid his right hand on her head, and raising aloft his eyes, as if to invoke a benediction, pronounced, in a tone of thrilling solemnity, the words, "May Heaven bless you !"

"Humph !" grunted Jack Walsh. But simple M'Grail, too really honest and pious to suspect another of delusion upon

such a subject, let fall a sympathetic tear in the blessed belief that he witnessed a sublime and edifying scene of tender and enlightened pastoral care. In the enthusiasm of the moment, he actually forgot Julius Blake's running horses.

Passing from Emily's spiritual interests to general matters, somebody chanced to comment on one of the paintings that adorned the room. This elicited from Julius observations on the styles of the various great painters; and although I did not, either then or at any time subsequently, possess the smallest connoisseurship on the subject, yet I felt extremely entertained with the practical and sagacious remarks of the reverend critic on the characteristics of the different schools, and the modes peculiar to each master of giving the "counterfeit presentment" of the great model, Nature. Julius did not in the least degree affect the slang of art; he ever avoided the semi-artistic phrases of "clever picture," "Claude-like touches," and such-

like expressions of rather dubious import, which people who would pass for connoisseurs adopt in order to conceal real ignorance. He mixed up his amusing gossipry on pictures with many scraps of rare biographical anecdote—where or how picked up, I know not; but told with a racy humour and vivacity that thawed even the silent and cynical Jack Walsh into a hearty laugh.

When Corregio, Raffaello, Titian, and some Irish heroes of the brush had passed in review, Julius started up from his chair, and walked over to a card-table.

"Suppose we beguile an hour with 'vicarial whist,' eh, M'Grail? You and I against Jack Walsh and Harry Bodkin. The cloth against the laity? eh, Vicar?"

The party was immediately formed; and M'Grail, well aware of Julius Blake's great skill as a player, was glad to be selected as his partner. Captain Bodkin was considered the best whist player in the province of Connaught. The fame of Julius

(acquired in the metropolis) had reached his envious ears, and he eagerly assented to a trial of skill with an adversary whose reputation was so formidable as to render a victory over him a matter of some honour.

Down sat the players—the cards were dealt—and in a few instants three of the party seemed deeply immersed in the fortunes of the game. But Julius was not at all inclined to suspend his usual flow of conversation; he talked away as if the game were a thousand miles out of his thoughts; talked of the turf, and offered to make small bets on Sir Hyacinth's grey filly, Bess-o'-Bedlam, criticized the horses expected to run at the ensuing Ballymackerrigan races; discussed a new method of forcing pines, introduced by Lord So-and-so's gardener; talked of Mr. Somebody's unmarried and unmarriageable daughters, expressing benevolent regret at the rule of society that restricted to men the right of making matrimonial proposals;

then took a flying shot at politics—then anecdote again, until Bodkin, Walsh, and the honest Vicar fairly threw down their cards to laugh it out—so irresistible was Julius's drollery.

"Upon my word, Mr. Blake," said Bodkin, "this mode of procedure is one which I most solemnly protest against. With your jokes and your stories, it is impossible to attend to the game."

"Why—how do you mean, my dear sir?" exclaimed Julius; "how do *I* contrive to attend to the game? Here have I performed the talking part, and won eight tricks already; whilst you, who had nothing to do but listen, complain of interruption! You don't, I hope, mean to convert one social little party into a Quaker meeting? I hold that chit-chat gives a fillip to skill —There, now, you have won the trick, and I ascribe your success to the inspiration of my wit."

"Ah, Blake," said Jack Walsh, "you are trying to play-off upon us the man-

œuvre that enabled you to fleece the antiquarian bishop."

Mr. Walsh then told how that Julius, playing picquet with a certain virtuoso bishop, contrived to engross him so completely in an angry dispute about the authenticity of a cameo in his lordship's possession, that the prelate lost temper, lost prudence, and lost the game; which had been played for a higher stake than Julius usually ventured on.

Julius playfully denied Mr. Walsh's accusation. He, however, thought it proper to adopt the silent plan which Walsh significantly recommended, and the game proceeded with unbroken harmony.

Whilst they played, Emily, who had quitted the room immediately after tea, returned to acquaint me that her father desired to see me. Rather surprised at this message from the sullen, ungracious Sir Hyacinth, I immediately proceeded to his dormitory. He was sitting up in bed. As soon as I entered, he extended his

hand—an unprecedented manifestation of cordiality—and without awaiting my inquiries, volunteered to inform me that he felt more at ease than he thought he should have done for a fortnight to come.

"I am truly glad to hear it," said I; "I am happy to have seen you—and now let me abridge my visit—it will be probably better for you to remain quite quiet."

"Sapient Sir," returned the Baronet, "I do not require your prescription—there is nothing of fever—be assured I shall despatch you as soon as your presence incommodes me. I—I—Upon my word, I—I cannot help feeling obliged for the interest you have shown in my fate——'Gad, it isn't one man in ten thousand who would turn his back upon such a magnificent burst as we had, to look after a poor dismounted knight. I am really obliged to you."

"Would not you have done as much for me, Sir Hyacinth?"

"Upon my soul I would *not*—and the hounds in full cry."

"Why, Sir," rejoined I, "it was mere Christian charity. *I* should have done just the same for Terry O'Brannigan; in short, for any stranger."

"*That* considerably diminishes the obligation," said Sir Hyacinth. "Christian charity! It is natural at your age to be *raw*—but Terry O'Brannigan would see you particularly well d—d before he'd turn his horse's head on your account. You'd do as much for any stranger—would you? I am certain you do not intend to offend me."

"Indeed I should think not!" I interposed.

"Very well—you are young and inexperienced, and, of course, I can make allowances. But never name 'Christian charity,' or any sort of 'charity,' in transactions among gentlemen; it looks like affectation, and is really uncivil from any-

body's lips, except a parson's. Let us change the subject. Who are in the drawing-room?"

I mentioned the names of the company.

"Aye," said the Knight, with some bitterness; "the fellows make their sympathy for myself a convenient veil for their attachment to my claret. I am surprised Bodkin should have left his wine so soon. He and Jack Walsh would not quit the tail of the hounds to save me from being hanged, drawn, and quartered."

"Perhaps they have not Christian charity," suggested I.

"Christian charity be d—d!" cried the intractable baronet. "Then there is my precious brother Julius."

I profited by a fit of coughing which interrupted Sir Hyacinth's complaints, to assure him that the concern evinced by Julius was most sincere and affectionate.

"What did Julius say about my accident?" he inquired. I recorded certain expressions of becoming fraternal sympa-

thy with which Julius had edified the visitors. Sir Hyacinth listened with a sneer, and it seemed as though he was restraining with some difficulty his sarcastic and disparaging comments. He certainly felt curious respecting the deportment of Julius during the evening. I was surprised at the minuteness with which he inquired after the sayings and doings of that reverend person. When I had answered all his questions,

"Now," said he, "leave me. I shall sleep if I can. Good night, you young blockhead. If you want a yarn upon 'Christian charity,' or 'the religious sentiment,' go to Julius, and he'll spin you one a mile long."

As I rose to quit the room, Lady Blake appeared from an adjoining closet, and greeted me with courteous kindness. On her face were indelibly stamped the characters of matrimonial martyrdom. She approached Sir Hyacinth's bed, and inquired how he felt. There was an ominous growl

in his voice, that seemed to threaten an explosion of conjugal ill-temper. Unwilling to witness a scene, I hastily vanished, and, without rejoining the party in the drawing-room, rode home to Castle Carroll.

CHAPTER V.

"*Val.* How now?

"*Jer.* Nothing now, sir; I have despatched some half-dozen duns with as much dexterity as a hungry judge does causes at dinner time."—*Love for Love.*

My father would have probably lectured me for remaining away until so late an hour of the night, if my mother had not anticipated him in the performance of that duty. My father, of course, then took my part, and, as usual, reminded his better-half that we, of the male kind, were not to be snubbed, curbed, and kept in leading-strings like misses. Glad to escape paternal censure on such easy terms, I retired to bed.

Next morning, about breakfast hour, the faces of the household were indicative of distrust, confusion, and anxiety. I was

not taken into any of the family councils, and accordingly sought information from the domestics. Those to whom I applied either would not, or could not, tell me what the matter was; and, sulky and anxious, I took my place at the breakfast-table. My father's brow was as black as night. My mother, as she poured out the tea, seemed dying for an opportunity to bestow a lecture upon somebody or other, when old Martin, the butler, suddenly popped his head into the room, saying,—

"It's thrue, sir; quite thrue."

"I told you so," said my mother; as if Martin's announcement were confirmatory of some piece of prophetic wisdom.

"Divil a word o' lie in it," resumed Martin, advancing to the table; "the sheriff's man slept last night at Kildrummery, and he axed how far to Castle Carroll; there's three of the red-coats wid him. O, warroo, warroo! what's to be done?"

"I always told you things would come to this, O'Carroll," said my mother.

"Faith, madam, if you did, you helped to accomplish your own prophecy!" responded The O'Carroll.

"If you had but curtailed your expenses, and given up the hounds!" persisted the lady.

"Silence!" bellowed The O'Carroll, in a voice that made us all tremble; "*my* hounds cost a devilish deal less than *your* entertainments; but what an ass I am to stay here, disputing with you, instead of taking prompt measures to secure ourselves. The doors and the yard gates, they're all locked?" he said, addressing the butler.

"Since ever we got the hard word of them vagabonds," responded Martin.

"Whistle up as many of the labourers and tenants as you can," said my father; "those fellows will have to pass through Bealadh bog—they won't be the worse of a washing in bog-water: the thicket, under

Knockabree, is a good position for an ambush."

Martin winked and vanished. He was a jewel of a major-domo, for a distressed Connaught squire: no man so ready at taking a hint; no man so prompt in action.

An anxious interval ensued. My father declared that this must be the especial doing of Peter Costello, the Kildrummery attorney; a practitioner who had recently undertaken, according to common report, to patronize all legal claims whatsoever against The O'Carroll, and sundry others of our western aristocracy, who had involved themselves in pecuniary difficulties, and whose law business was already established in the hands of Tony O'Brallaghan, attorney, of Galway.

Meanwhile, the trusty Martin took his measures. Summoning a score of stout, athletic fellows to his aid, they all proceeded to the ambush at Knockabree, there to wait the coming of the legal forces, on whose discomfiture they were

resolved. Martin, with prudent generalship, enforced strict silence on his men, whose faces were blackened, to defy recognition. Despite their impatience, they quietly waited, *perdu* in the thicket, until the sheriff's officer and his military escort reached the spot. Simultaneously rushing from their covert upon the invaders, they speedily disarmed the three soldiers, who, with their less warlike comrade, were incontinently immersed in an adjoining bog-hole, with their heads down and their heels in the air.

"How long will we lave them in the bath, Mr. Martin, dear?" inquired one of the party, as soon as the heads of all three were firmly stuck in the mud at the bottom of the bog-hole.

"Our object," replied Martin, "is to tache them better manners for the future, and not to commit murdher on the cratures. Consider, boys, that they only act as they are taught, and trained, and paid for: ourselves might do the same, if we

knew no better. No, we wont send them out of the world; we only want to send them out of Connaught."

"Whirroo!" shouted all the boys in concert.

"So, hoist 'em up out of the could bath," continued Martin, "or it might happen to stifle them," (the command was promptly obeyed), "and let them ride home upon horses that never sucked a dam."

This enigmatical instruction was immediately carried into effect: four huge furze-bushes were cut; the invaders, deprived of their nether garments, were set astride thereon, and a switch placed in each man's hand, with instructions to get home as fast as possible, lest their sweethearts might wonder what kept them. Martin, however, deemed their offence deserving of a graver remonstrance:—

"Are you not ashamed of yourselves," he indignantly asked, "to come into a civilized counthry, wid your blackguard

warrants? Do you think that the gentlemen of these parts are divils entirely, to say they'd be giving money to *you*, or your employers, and maybe wanting it badly themselves? Cut your sticks out of Connaught, you blackguards! and take care how you come within the neighbourhood, skulking or lurching again; for, by this and by that, the next time we ketch yez, it is'n't to mount yez a-horseback we will!"

What the penalty *was* to be, Martin did not say; and probably his oracular silence was quite as alarming as a more direct threat.

Shall I suffer irretrievably, in the reader's good opinion, if I confess that curiosity led me to witness the whole scene, disguised with blackened face, and ensconced in the friendly ambush of the thicket?

The discomfited intruders slunk away; the victors had disarmed the soldiers, and hid their muskets; and having watched

the retreating foe for a while, washed the black stains from their faces, and returned triumphantly to Castle Carroll. The whole household were in ecstacy ; Martin was the hero of the day ; the servants prepared to celebrate the exploit of Martin's forces with copious libations ; they were inexpressibly horrified and scandalized that any limb of the executive law should presume to invade Castle Carroll. It was an outrage on the personal honour of every domestic in the house ; accordingly, the servants' hall got wild and riotous that night ; and verily I am unable to state that the parlour was in any wise more orderly.

My father's affairs were now reduced to a condition that rendered him recklessly anxious to drown in revelry the recollection of his embarrassments. He was what in Connaught is significantly termed, "on his keeping." *Malgre* the gallant victory achieved by Martin over the foe, he deemed it prudent to keep close house, unless on

Sundays. His affairs were, indeed, in a lamentably shattered state. His bills had been dishonoured—interest had accumulated upon principal—his credit had ebbed so low that further loans could not be obtained from any quarter.

Notwithstanding the habitual *insouciance* of youth, my spirits were very much depressed by the deplorable condition of my father's affairs. Although I had previously seen many indications of domestic embarrassment, yet I never, until now, was aware of the perfectly desperate condition of our ancient house. The knowledge weighed upon my heart like a nightmare. I felt myself under the pressure of an intolerable load that I could not shake off. I rambled out in a moping and disconsolate mood. Without any definite purpose of going to Ballymore, I bent my steps along the sea coast, until I found myself within the precincts of Sir Hyacinth's domain. Fatigued much more by mental disquiet than by the walk I had taken, I sat down to

rest upon a rustic seat, where I remained for an hour, musing sadly enough. When the lengthening shadows warned me to return, I rose—and was suddenly confronted by Miss Blake who had walked out alone from the house. Our occasional meetings had created that species of intimacy which generally grows up between youthful acquaintance. A leading trait in Emily's character from her earliest childhood was its unaffected frankness. I presume my moody brow was the herald of the vexed spirit within me; for Emily, on extending her hand, could not help saying, "Are you ill? or has anything occurred to annoy you?"

"Why do you ask, Miss Blake?"

"Because you look quite out of sorts. Your face is the most tragic affair I have seen for a long time."

Although there was a slight touch of playfulness in her manner, yet it was impossible to mistake the good-natured interest she felt. She took her seat upon the

rustic bench from which I had just risen —I resumed mine, and was silent for a few moments. I did not well know how to act. It was not a very agreeable task to apprize a young lady that my family was insolvent, or likely to become so. On the other hand, there was something inexpressibly tempting in the proffered sympathy of Emily. I persuaded myself that her friendly inquiries merited my confidence; and I told her that I was dispirited by the pecuniary embarassments of my father. My manner, rather than my words, intimated the serious nature of our difficulties. Emily listened with the deepest attention; her face assumed an expression of the tenderest compassion, and she said, in a tone that went to my heart,—

"I wish to heaven I could assist you!"

I could not help saying, as I took her hand, "I can scarcely regret our disasters, Miss Blake, since they have procured me the exquisite consolation of your sympathy!"

Her eyes filled with tears; she appeared much confused, and, after a good deal of hesitation, said—

"Mamma has just given me fifty guineas for my birthday. I have the entire disposal of that sum. Oh, Mr. O'Carroll, do not be angry if I ask you to take it. *Do*, dear Maurice—it may remove some of the embarrassments you speak of; I have really no possible use for it."

Emily, thought I to myself, is a charming creature; but I never can accept of her money. Out upon the shabby hero who could announce his bankruptcy to a beautiful, generous girl, and spunge on her pocket through the medium of her sensibility! No; I should feel degraded were I to accept her offer under the present circumstances—though I cannot but rejoice at the substantial evidence of her friendship it affords.

Actuated by this impulse, I declined the proffered kindness of my fascinating companion. She tried to shake my resolution,

but I was inflexible. We parted; and I returned to Castle Carroll with a heart considerably lighter than when I left it.

I was met by my mother with a gratifying bit of intelligence. A letter had arrived in my absence, announcing that a distant relation of hers had made his exit from the world, devising a landed estate of £400 per annum, together with a sum of three hundred pounds in public securities, in equal parts between my mother and a very eccentric relative of the testator's, hight Edward M'Ginty, usually known in our neighbourhood by the sobriquet of "Cracked Ned." This oddity resided in a thatched cottage, about two miles (Connaught measure) from our residence. His habits were those of a snug and wealthy old widower, secluding himself from general society from a cynical notion that nobody sought his acquaintance without harbouring designs upon his purse; but indulgent to the very few members of his household, especially in the article of an

excellent table. A thousand stories of his eccentricity were circulated, of which some represented Mr. Edward M'Ginty as being absolutely childish; whilst others ascribed to him that species of mischievous cunning so often united with insanity.

It was on the second day after that of Martin's triumph over the presumptuous emissaries of the law, that the letter arrived which announced to my mother that she and "Cracked Ned" were associated in the very seasonable acquisition I have mentioned. In truth, it arrived just in time to avert the crash of ruin. My father's first exclamation was one of delight. His next was a rousing curse at the testator for not having left the entire to my mother, instead of bestowing a part upon "that crazy vagabond, who," he said, "had not the spirit to spend it like a gentleman. And, faith, it would be hard to expect that he should," added the indignant O'Carroll; "for what was his grandfather but a shabby old linen-draper

in Galway, who put some money together by a sort of penurious economy?"

"Is not Mr. M'Ginty somehow related to the Trenches?" asked I.

"Why, yes. The linen-draper married an old maid of the Ballywhack family—Kitty Trench, who had been hawked about to races and danced about at balls for thirty years without getting an offer. In utter desperation she married M'Ginty, who proposed for her out of pure vanity; and, contrary to all human expectation, she produced a son, who never opened his lips without talking of 'My uncle, General Trench,' and who was father of Cracked Ned—and quite as queer a fellow as his son."

CHAPTER VI.

"A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse."
SHAKSPEARE.

"Oh for a pad-horse, pack-horse, or a post-horse."
BEN JONSON, *A Tale of a Tub.*

IN about a week after the conversation I have recorded at the close of the last chapter, I wended my way one fine morning along a green, shady lane, overhung with old elms, that led, at the distance of something more than a mile, to a place where several roads met, and where the rustic inn and stabling, the church and chapel, the market-house and a few adjoining cottages, formed a nucleus for a future village. The name of this little hamlet was Crossnacoppal; a name derived, in all probability, from the reputation for pro-

vincial jockeyship the place had from time immemorial possessed. The landlord of the inn combined the character of host with that of horse-dealer; but in the greater number of the sales effected at his premises he had only an indirect interest. Nineteen out of twenty horses sold in the yard of Crossnacoppal were brought there by itinerant dealers from different parts of the country. They were generally successful in making sales, for the place had got a name; and a week never passed without the presence of some knowing squires —or squires who affected knowledge—or the accredited deputies of such personages.

Tim Molony, the *maître d'auberge*, was my very special and approved good crony. He was sportingly inclined, and being a favourite with the gentry of the district, was freely permitted to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, encased in the honourable garb of red coat and top-boots. His stables were a good lounge for an idle youngster; there were frequently very handsome horses

to be seen there, and I always had a passion for a noble steed; although I honestly confess that I never was able to acquire that scientific knowledge of the nature and propensities of the equine tribe—that acute appreciation of their "famous points"—that keen capacity for detecting their blemishes—which in some persons seems almost intuitive. My utmost skill in horseflesh was of a much more common-place and unpretending kind; being merely that of a bold, zealous, practised rider, who could go anywhere, or over anything, on the back of a good hunter, and who was just entitled to the negative praise, that he would not, by mismanagement, actually spoil a valuable horse. Of shape and make, as indications of equine capacity, I had yet but slender pretensions to dub myself a judge.

Arrived at Tim's stables, my attention was arrested by a dealer from Roscommon, who was showing off a very flashy-looking hunter in the yard to two gentlemen.

"Aye," said the elder of the gentlemen, who was no other than our sporting friend Harry Bodkin, "he has some good points enough. Good chest and forehand—eh, Julius?"

The reverend person appealed to, smiled without immediately replying, and continued to inspect the horse, not with the "knowing" expression of the self-confident jockey, who desires to convey, by his supercilious air of connoisseurship, the impression that he is not to be bit; but with the modest scrutiny of the unpretending spectator, who rather feels himself in need of instruction than qualified to advise.

The dealer was eloquent in praise of his horse—fifteen hands and a half—spanking action—wonderful bone—a liberal assortment, in short, of all the good qualities of a prime hunter. The horse was undoubtedly a fine, showy animal, and Bodkin was evidently fascinated with the dealer's eloquence. He examined the teeth, and satis-

fied himself that the horse was only six off; the marks were apparently genuine, and he conceived that his skilful eye would have detected the delusion of cautery. He sprang into the saddle, and tried the horse at walk, trot, gallop, and leap: pleasant in his pace and action, he seemed a rare acquisition to a foxhunter.

"Eh, Julius? how do you like him now?" asked Bodkin, descending from the saddle, and recurring (as every one did on every possible subject) to Julius Blake's opinion and advice. "Six off—no bishoping—eh?"

"I am certain there has been none," said Julius, having looked at the teeth.

"Great barrel—eh?" resumed Bodkin.

"Yes," answered Julius.

"What are you eyeing his legs for? See anything wrong there?"

"Um—I am a *leetle* dubious. He is longer than I like between the knee and the hock—Bad point that, for a heavy field."

"Not *very* much too long," said Bodkin, whose knowledge of a horse's points was very little better than my own. "You remember my brown mare, Miss Cooper—she was just as long between the knee and the hock, and yet she performed deliciously."

"Beautiful flat fore-legs, gentlemen," said the dealer, who saw from the direction of their eyes that the animal's limbs were under discussion, although their words did not reach his ears.

Julius acquiesced; but immediately passed his hand down the backs of the "beautiful fore-legs," and announced that whereas the back sinew in the off fore-leg was firm and well defined, the corresponding sinew in the near leg was quite imperceptible.

"Not the laste matter in life, sir," pleaded the dealer. "The sinew your reverence can't feel is every bit as strong as the other: its only deeper sunk, like."

"For all that," responded Julius, "I

should fear if I hunted your horse in anything of a stiffish country, he'd play tol-de-rol with the business. And harkee, honest man! are you sure he never wore a boot?"

"A boot? O, jimini! Never, 'pon my sowl and reputation."

"Then, my friend, with sincere concern for your soul, and high respect for your reputation, I don't quite understand that sort of grey ring about the near fetlock. Only for the thorough reliance I have in your integrity, I should say your horse is a brusher."

"A brusher? and he one of Trumpeter's get? Bluranagers! Does your reverence think me a fool?"

"Anything but that, my good friend. But his parentage does not prevent him from brushing. I can tell you I have rode three or four of Trumpeter's get, and every mother's foal of them brushed."

"It would make a saint swear, just to listen to your reverence. There ain't a horse in all Connaught, that you wouldn't

take away his *carackter* if you went to work upon him this way. That horse, now—I never knew him cut, nor brush, nor trip, on the road nor in the field. Aye, your reverence may look at his knees—but, upon my conscience, if you examined them through microcosms, the devil a scratch, nor the ghost of a scratch, would you find upon 'em."

The divine, unheeding this torrent of eulogistic eloquence, had picked up successively the two fore-legs, in order more accurately to examine the knees by bending up the joints. The inspection assured him that the knees were perfectly unscarred, and the horse-dealer crowed with commensurate triumph. But Julius was unsatisfied, and still pursued his scrutiny.

"Och, murdher! murdher!" cried the dealer, in a serio-comic strain, "isn't it a shame to see a clargyman so bent upon defamation?"

"Ah!" cried Julius, "here's the mark of an old scar over the eye."

The dealer was surprised at this disco-

very. The scar was well healed, and the hair so very slightly indicated the mishap, that it would have escaped any but the keenest and most practised critic.

"He knocked his head against the wall of the stable," said the dealer.

"Very likely he did," replied Julius; "but I suspect he also knocked it against the road."

"Why, d—n it!" cried the dealer, getting angry, "you wouldn't make him out a stumbler, would you? Didn't you see how sound his knees are?"

"I own I saw no traces of cut knees. But as I am not in the secrets of his stable, I shall only hint that I *have* known falls in which the horse's head was cut, whilst his knees escaped—and, moreover, that perhaps I know a knack or two of bringing smooth hair over injured knees myself. But then these splents"—

"Splents!" broke in the dealer. "Your reverence talks like a child. The best horses ever foaled have splents."

"Yes, my friend, but not quite so near the knee-joints. I do not pretend to know much about horse-flesh,"—(the dealer looked as if he thought Julius knew a confounded deal too much!)—"but, with the few elementary notions I happen to possess, I should say that there are points enough about your horse to account for the scar on his head, without arraigning the wall of the stable. At any rate, I am right glad that I was't on his back when he came by it."

Had Captain Bodkin finally resolved on then buying the horse, he could have knocked fifty per cent., at the least, from the dealer's demand, so effective was the cool, keen, critical disparagement of the reverend scrutinist. But Julius's criticisms had put Bodkin completely out of humour with the animal. He accordingly kept his money—or rather his promissory note—and the dealer retained possession of his steed.

Julius had nodded familiarly to me on

my arrival at Tim Molony's yard; he now advanced, shook hands, and inquired politely for my family. I asked for Sir Hyacinth, and I learned that he was slowly, though steadily improving.

"I beg you pardon, my dear boy," continued Julius, "for not having spoken to you the moment I saw you; but it is a peculiarity of mine, that I cannot bear the slightest interruption when forming my judgment on a horse. Bodkin was rather anxious to buy that flashy brute, and I charitably wished to prevent his being gammoned. In your passage through this world, my dear Maurice, seize every occasion for assisting your friends, and of cultivating the sweet charities of life. The habit of benevolence acquires consistency and strength by constant use—it becomes a second nature."

"Come now, Julius," said Captain Bodkin, "own the truth—whether was your scrutiny of the horse intended for *my* benefit, or to pay off an old spite you

owed that Roscommon blackguard, for biting you about the chestnut filly this time three years?"

"You see," said Julius, addressing me, "our benevolence is often disparaged and vilified by the very persons who profit by its exercise. But that should not discourage us; human praise should never be the motive of our actions."

"Good bye, Julius," said Bodkin; "if you begin to preach, I'm off." And as he had completed the business that brought him to Crossnacoppal, he departed to his home. Julius, taking my arm, walked out of the yard in the direction of Castle Carroll.

"I wish to pay my respects to your mother," said he. "She and I were old friends before *you* came into the world. I am truly glad to hear she has been left a good legacy."

"It is very welcome," said I.

"No doubt," answered he; "philosophers have discussed whether money earned

by hard industry, or wealth obtained without effort, like your mother's windfall, is the sweeter. I believe that few who honestly get money in any mode, ever wish they had obtained it in a different way. Those who have got it enjoy it, and leave disputes about the most agreeable modes of acquisition to those who have none. Heigho!"

As Julius spoke, a peasant jumped over the adjoining fence upon the high road, and joined us, respectfully keeping about half a pace behind. He was the youth whose brother's funeral had been so unceremoniously disturbed by the reckless equestrianism of Sir Hyacinth Blake.

"Well, Jerry Brien," said Julius, who knew all the country-folk by name, "how fares the world with you?"

"Badly enough, your reverence, since poor Tim died. Ah! God bless your honour, 'tis *you* would have feeling for the poor, and not ride them down forninst *

* In presence of.

their brother's coffin, as others would, that shall be nameless."

Julius looked grave, and shook his head.

"How has your poor mother borne her loss?" he asked, in a tone of deep sympathy.

"Why, plase your reverence, the poor must work at all times; and that, thank God, is one great advantage we have over them that has more of this world's goods than they knows what to do with. When my mother is feeding the fowl, or the pigs, or getting the girls to spin the flax or churn the butter, her business helps to drive her sorrow from her mind; and that wouldn't be so with a rich lady, who had nothing upon airth to do but sit all day in her chair, twisting her fingers, and lamenting for her loss. And a bitter loss was Tim!" pursued the poor brother, his eyes filling at the recollection; "but—— but God's will be done."

"Amen," said Julius, kindly laying his

hand on Jerry Brien's shoulder as we all walked along. "God, my dear young man, has implanted family affection in our breasts for the wisest and holiest of purposes. They who are all knit together in the bonds of love around one hearth, possess in each other's attachment a richer mine of happiness than the wealth or the pomp of this world could possibly bestow. And when the stroke of death falls amongst them—when the little company are thinned by the loss of a dear, familiar face—when the loved voice that has so often cheered the fire-side is mute in the grave—oh! then it is God only who can comfort the sore hearts that mourn for their bitter deprivation."

There were tears, real tears, twinkling in the eyes of Julius, as he turned full to look on Jerry, to whom his gaze was indicative of the most fraternal sympathy. These were the traits of manner that rendered Julius so popular throughout our neighbourhood. The people knew he was

poor, and accordingly expected no pecuniary bounty from him. The inventive zeal of some warm partizans, improving on the fact that his brother had given to a stranger his expected advowson, alleged that Sir Hyacinth had defrauded him of a large paternal legacy by destroying a will; and that if Mr. Julius had his own, there wouldn't be a poor body in want of anything about Ballymore. Meanwhile Julius familiarly conversed with all; jesting with the mirthful and light-hearted; grieving, praying, and condoling with the serious and the mournful; discussing crops and stock with the tenantry; blandly looking on at the dancers at patterns; accepting an occasional pinch from the snuff-boxes of the seniors, and praising the activity of the youths with whom he sometimes vouchsafed to wrestle and run foot-races. He occasionally would compliment a rustic damsel on the smartness of her cap or the colour of her ribbons; but the strictness of moral decorum which he always pre-

served, protected his playful condescensions from scandal. So popular was Julius, that if a service was to be rendered to him—a dog to be brought from a distance, or a message to be carried—there were twenty competitors for the happiness of serving the man whose fascinating courtesy had won for him the golden opinions of all.

The sight of a pair of good ploughing-horses in the neighbouring field, gave Julius occasion to divert his talk from family bereavements to horseflesh. Jerry Brien learned that his condescending friend had just prevented Captain Harry Bodkin from buying the bay horse exposed for sale at Tim Molony's.

"If its the big bay beast that came from Roscommon last week," observed Jerry, "Mr. Bodkin has a right to be obliged to your reverence. He a'n't safe for the road. I know him a little. I was out at my uncle's about eight or ten weeks ago, when Darby Delany, the jobber, was doing him

up. He was riding him out one day on the Togher road, when the beast came whop on the stones, and, by some maracle, his knees wasn't hurted; but his head was badly cut above the eye."

Julius looked at me with a glance of triumph at his own skill, in having discovered the scar, and divined the nature of the accident.

"There was another dacent horse in Darby's hands," pursued Jerry. "He was elder brother of the bay. If an ould horse was only fit for dog's beef, Darby would have him figged up for the market in a month."

"Was the horse you speak of black, with a star on his forehead, and white fetlocks?"

"He was, your honour."

"Upon my word, then, Mr. Delany is a most accomplished artist. I was very near being taken in about a year ago to buy that horse myself. I suppose I should have had a charming bargain."

"Your reverence would have had a *dead* bargain," replied Jerry; "for the baste *died* the week before last."

We had now reached Jerry's cottage. It was situated at the head of a glen, through which a path had led us from the high road, being rather a short cut to Castle Carroll.

"This is our spot, Mr. Julius," said Jerry; "would your honours come in and see my mother?"

We entered, and found the old woman engaged in her household occupations. She curtseyed—Julius shook hands with her. She thanked him for the high honour of his visit—Julius spoke of the brotherhood of all the family of Adam. She wept—Julius put his handkerchief to his eyes.

And was all this mere acting? If so, Julius was undoubtedly a first-rate actor. But I never could believe it was mere acting. Julius had a fervid imagination; and, through the aid of his imaginative

faculty, he was able to kindle up a kind of half-real, half-poetic, sympathy with the joys and sorrows of his fellow-beings. He certainly did not intend to play the hypocrite. Through the medium of his poetical imagination, he firmly believed that he was friendly, because he talked about friendship —benevolent, because he talked about benevolence—religious, because he talked about religion. It is exceedingly probable that his transient ebullitions of enthusiasm were really sincere whilst they lasted.

After remaining in the cottage about a quarter of an hour, we resumed our walk to my father's house.

CHAPTER VII.

"*Host.* ——Ferret, go bolt your master;
Here's gear will startle him."—*The New Inn.*

THE felicitations of Julius were cordially tendered and graciously received.

"It is a horrid nuisance," said my father, "to be mixed up with that crazy devil M'Ginty—a rascal that will never run in couples with any rational being."

"He is a crusty old gentleman, no doubt," replied Julius. "Now, would it not be a great triumph of Madame O'Carroll's *sçavoir faire*, if she could domesticate the oddity at Castle Carroll, and secure the reversion of his moiety of this windfall?"

"Egad! you're right, old fellow," cried my father, seizing (half in earnest) on the idea which Blake threw out wholly in jest.

"The man is so mad," observed my mother, "that we should not find him very manageable. You have heard the shocking way he used to treat his poor wife—and then, in the end, refusing to go to her funeral. An unnatural wretch!"

"I never should refuse to go to *yours*, my dear," said The O'Carroll.

"Indeed, my dear," she answered, very tartly, "that's a portion of your conjugal duty I am sure you would be only too happy to perform."

"Well, but now that M'Ginty has been so many years a widower," resumed Julius, who appeared not to hear the conjugal parenthesis, "now that he has been so long a widower, it is to be hoped that advancing age has brought with it an increase of wisdom."

"I know not," said my mother. "Eccentricity generally increases with age. But, at all events, the odd man must be visited, and, probably, the sooner the better."

In a short time we all prepared to act on this suggestion. I obtained permission to join the party, as I felt rather curious to behold the odd man's domicile as well as its owner. Julius Blake, who did not happen to have any more agreeable mode of disposing of the day, acceded to my father's request that he might accompany us.

"You've the gift of the gab, Blake," said my sire, "and it may not be amiss for somebody to throw in a stave with this crusty old oddity. I am sure I shouldn't know on earth what to say to him."

"But, O'Carroll," interposed my mother, "is it quite safe for *you* to stir out? You know you resolved to keep house, except on Sundays, for a cogent reason." She said this, without the smallest reserve, before Julius, who seemed, as a matter of course, to slide into the familiar confidence of every family in the country.

"O, there's no fear, I think," responded The O'Carroll. "I hardly think

the enemy can be in the neighbourhood to-day—it is unlikely they would expect to find me abroad so soon after Martin made the scoundrels beat a march. We can go through the hazel scrub, and strike into the bog road, where, I think, no sheriff's boys will be apt to show their noses."

We were speedily on horseback, and leisurely trotting along in the direction of Mr. M'Ginty's residence. I have already said that his abode was about two miles distant from my father's house. On quitting our enclosures, the way lay through a boggy tract of some extent.

Let not the word "bog" appal the English reader with ideas of sterility and ugliness. In fact, although nothing can be uglier than a black expanse of worn-out peat, yet the surface of an uncut bog, with its rich covering of green or purple heath, is as picturesque a feature in the midst of hill scenery as the eye can alight on.

Through a district covered with luxu-

riant heather, gay with its rich crimson blossoms, lay our path to Mr. M'Ginty's dwelling; but when we arrived at what, by courtesy, was termed his "enclosure," the scene changed greatly for the worse. The straggling stone-fences were everywhere broken. One tall, solitary, limestone pier, at the end of an *intended* avenue, supported a gate rudely formed of young firs, which swung against an upright bogstick; the uncouth representative of the second pier, which should have been there, but was not. The ground within was principally worn-out bog, which had been cut down to the foundation. The surface presented an alternation of white clay, patches of gravel, rushes, and angular puddles of water. An embryo lane was tracked up to the cottage, which mansion was embosomed among starved and unhealthy fir-trees, stunted by the inroads of cattle. So little skilled was Mr. M'Ginty in the art of engineering, that although the weather was extremely dry, some parts

of the approach were too soft to afford good footing for our horses. When we had surmounted these difficult passes, we found, at a turn in the lane, that our way was blockaded by a wall of loose field stones, which had recently been thrown across it. Julius dismounted in order to open a passage for my mother's horse; and whilst he was thus occupied, we heard the merry voices of a pair of laughing dames, who appeared to enjoy their own mirth with extravagant zest. They were walking from the house, picking their steps along the rough and thorny path; each bore a horsewhip in one hand, and held up the skirt of her riding-dress with the other. A servant followed, leading their horses. Ere they had emerged from the grove of stunted firs, I distinctly heard one of them say to her companion, probably in answer to a lamentation touching the non-attendance of some expected escort,—

"Yes, indeed, Bessy—it is provoking enough. For myself, I would rather go to

hell with the men, than to heaven with the women."*

"A forcible expression that," said Julius, suspending his operations for one moment. "Even if I did not recognize the voice, I should know that the vigorous sentiment could proceed from but one person living—Miss Isabella French."

And as Julius spoke, Isabella and her sister emerged from the trees close to the spot where we waited. Isabella stopped short, and stared at our party. Her servant immediately following with the horses, she seized a stirrup, and applying it to her eye in the fashion of an eye-glass, scrutinized us severally through it. My father, who was slightly acquainted with her, bowed. Bold, beautiful, and brazen, she stared at him as if she never had seen him before. Julius, who, with my assistance, had now thrown down the obstruction,

* The *ipsissima verba* of an Irish peeress, who, in extreme old age, divides her attention between piety and rouge, the Bible and the toilette.

led his own horse and my mother's through the gap we had made, and, taking off his hat, bowed graciously to both the Amazonian apparitions.

"I was aware of your approach," he said to Isabella, in a tone of the softest courtesy; "I was aware of your approach before I had the happiness of seeing you. Your voice was more audible, perhaps, than you thought; and the vigour of your *philanthropy* at once revealed to me that Miss Trench was the speaker."

"La! so you overheard me—did you?" said the beauty, carelessly. "I suppose you are going to give me a specimen of your clerical eloquence in the shape of a reproof. It isn't the least use in the world, Reverendissimus ——, so spare your homily. I was saying to Bessy, that when a set of women get together, nothing in nature can be more humdrum. The advent of any sort of *homo* must be a relief, even if the *homo* were as stupid as Mr. Julius Blake himself."

"My dear Miss Trench," responded the mild, persuasive voice of Julius, "I fully appreciate your kindness. Believe me, I do not censure the social instinct that leads the young and happy to seek enjoyment in society; but I cannot, in any justice to my sacred character, avoid reproving the indifference to an infernal destination which your words expressed."

My readers have seen that Julius, when occasion required, invariably moulded his language to a perfect conformity with what he conceived to be the proprieties of the parsonic character. The beautiful object of his mild reproof, and her equally beautiful sister, threw back their luxuriant tresses, laughed scornfully, displaying teeth of the most dazzling whiteness, and brandished their horsewhips with a gesture of playful menace.

"Nay, we will say no more about it," said Julius, suddenly changing his tone; "but, tell me, have you been at Mr.

M'Ginty's?" (an affirmative nod from Isabella) "and will you return with us there?"

This proposal was rejected by both ladies, in a breath; and Julius inferred from their manner that they had been visiting the oddity, and had met an uncourteous reception; they then mounted their steeds and rode away, bestowing the slightest conceivable adieu upon our party. My mother, who did not wish to be exposed to their capricious insolence, had looked as if she saw them not, during the entire interview. My father said, when they were gone, that they both were uncommonly fine women, especially Miss Trench, but intolerably conceited. "Do you know, Blake," said he to Julius in a lower voice, "I think, what has made Isabella so unusually cock-a-hoop of late, is the attention Sir Hyacinth pays her: positively, Lady Blake ought to look to it."

"For shame, O'Carroll; no scandal, if you please;" replied Julius, very gravely.

"Oh, beg pardon; didn't mean to—"

"Oh, of course you did'n't."

"Those Miss Trenches will have money," observed my father.

"I am told," said Julius, that Bessy declares she will never marry, but will reside with Isabella and her husband."

"So much the worse for Isabella's husband, whoever that ill-starred wight may chance to be: Bessy is an ill-conditioned creature."

"Perhaps Isabella's masculine qualities may scare away suitors," said my mother.

"Poh! nothing of that sort ever frightens men," responded The O'Carroll, indignantly spurning the suggestion; "young Hopeful, here," (looking at me) "would not be afraid to propose for either Bell or Bessy."

"Not a bit," cried I, looking as important as I could; "I should take either of the sisters, if I thought the devil would take the other; but *both* would be too much—too much!"

My father broke into a loud laugh of approbation.

"Oh, Maurice!" my mother began.

"Really, my dear young friend!" expostulated Julius—

But we were now at the odd man's hall-door, and the necessity of knocking put an end to both the homilies with which I was threatened. The door was opened by a plough-boy, who was stuffing a potato into his mouth.

"Is your master at home?"

"Yerra, where else would he be?" returned the janitor.

"Can we see him?"

"Upon my troth, I don't know that! sometimes he lets quality in, and more times he turns them out."

"Is he busy at present?"

"Aye, is he! the busiest part of the day wid him."

"What is he doing?"

"Eating his dinner," said the plough-boy, with a grin.

"Will you ask him, my good gossoon, if he will admit us?"

The boy demurred: "Indeed, your honour, I'd just as lieve let it alone; it isn't twenty minutes since he packed off the two Miss Trenches with a flea in their ear; and, indeed, they had small raison to be thankful to themselves for coming near the ould gentleman, at all, at all!"

"But *we* wish to see him on business; particular business."

The gossoon put his finger on his mouth, and stood for half a minute in a contemplative attitude.

"Would this help to get us a sight of him?" said my father, holding up a sixpence; the boy closed his fingers on the coin, and mused for another half minute. "I have it!" said he; "just ride round the corner, and show yourselves forninst the parlour windy, where he's eating his dinner; then himself will screech out to me, 'Mike! do you know who's them outside, and what they want?' so then I'll say,

'It's quality that wants to see your honour's honour;' and, if his honour is cross, he may make answer, 'Tell them to go to the devil, Mike!' but, if he's in good humour, he may say, 'Tell them to walk in, Mike:' any way, he'd be ten times likelier to let yez in, by coming round him cutely that-a-way, than if I boulted into the parlour afore he seen yez from the windy, and tould him, pop! yez had business wid his honour. Ogh!" continued the gossoon, winking with an amusing air of self-congratulation, "it's myself that knows how to manage his honour; that is," he added, qualifying his boast, "when he isn't entirely past management."

"I am certain you do, Mike," said Julius, "and we commit ourselves unreservedly to your guidance."

At this moment a voice from within the parlour was heard, loudly contesting for mastery with the barking of a dog or two, that had just begun to challenge the intruders; with some apparent difficulty the

human voice prevailed, and the dogs were silenced.

"Whisht! that's himself," cried Mike, creeping over to the parlour door, as if he was treading among eggs.

"Here, sir; here, your honour!" and Mike, opening the door, presented himself to his master, whose peevish, acidulated voice we heard inquiring what the noise in the hall was about?

"It's quality that wants to see you, sir."

"Tell them to go to the d——! Stay! what are their names?"

"Mr. O'Carroll, and the mistress, and the ruverend parson Blake," replied Mike; repeating, with some slight variations, the names which Julius pronounced for his edification close outside the door.

"Send 'em in."

We accordingly entered the presence-chamber of Mr. M'Ginty, whose attitude unquestionably justified his reputation for eccentricity. He was seated at a round table on a high leathern chair, with his legs

extended across two smaller chairs at either side. He was dressed in a loose old robe-de-chambre, and on his head was a red foraging cap with a tarnished gold tassel, knowingly cocked over his left eye. He seemed a stout-built man of over sixty. He looked at us for one moment, and then immediately resumed his dinner, without bestowing the least further notice on his visitors. We waited patiently until the old man put away his plate. He then said, more graciously than his manner on our entrance had promised,—

"You were right—quite right and rational—to allow me to finish my dinner in silence. I hate to be spoken to at meal times. Conceive one's enjoyment of an exquisite morsel of five-year old mutton, or a delicately flavoured slice of tender turkey with its trusty comrade, ham—conceive one's enjoyment of such edibles roughly disturbed in order to reply to some *bêtise* or some impertinence! There should be a statue of Harpocrates in every refec-

tory. *You*, madam and gentlemen, have shown a just appreciation of the sacred quiescence of dinner—in requital of which, I beg leave to drink all your healths in a brimming mug of claret."

And having drunk off the claret, much to his own evident satisfaction, he continued to philosophise for our edification.

"You see my fare," said he. "Substantial food. No kickshaws. This is what I term enjoying the cream of existence. I leave the blue skimmed milk to those who like it. The cream of existence is to eat what you like, drink what you like, and when and where you like—to dress how you like, and to say what you like, and not to care a rush for what the world thinks about you. What rational man would be a slave to the world's prejudices or caprices? If you were going to be hanged to-morrow, would the world stop your execution? If your affairs were embarrassed, would the world pay your debts? The world would see you d—d first. We

learn from the great teacher of the Israelites, Moses, and also from the heathen philosopher Pythagoras——"

Here Mr. M'Ginty was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing, which seemed to break the chain of his ideas; for when it subsided he did not immediately resume his lecture.

"As to Moses and Pythagoras," said Julius, pointing, as he spoke, to the bacon and beans which Mike had not yet removed from the table, "if *they* presided in your kitchen, they would have spoiled an excellent dinner."

"Give me your hand, Mr. Blake—you have an original mind. Moses and Pythagoras—bacon and beans—not one man in ten thousand would have hit off the connexion. I honour you, sir, and will drink your health. I shall be proud, sir, to cultivate your farther acquaintance."

"You do me great honour, Mr. M'Ginty."

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Blake. I can discriminate. A casual remark may betray

the existence of vast intellectual merit.—But we were talking of the world and its selfishness. Bell Trench and her sister Bessy beat me up to-day. What brought them here? Was it love for their old relation? No, verily! But they had heard of that recent windfall, and they came here to put me in mind of 'em. Perhaps I didn't give them a slight hint that I saw through their purpose. I promise you they won't come here again. Oh, no."

He threw himself back in his chair to indulge in a chuckling laugh at the expulsion of his lady-relatives. It was evident that Julius, by his lucky hit about Moses and Pythagoras, had established himself in the odd man's good opinion. This happy result extended in a lesser degree to us all. I was fortunate enough to attract some favourable notice, per favour of a friendship I was rapidly forming with a respectable pointer. The dog had at first seemed imbued with the cynical spirit of his master; but probably observing the relax-

ation of M'Ginty's asperity, the sagacious animal conformed "regis ad exemplar," and having smelt me attentively, seemed satisfied that I was not quite unworthy his acquaintance. M'Ginty saw, and smiled.

When good humour seemed thoroughly established amongst us, my mother ventured to open the business of our visit.

"I have taken the liberty of visiting you, Mr. M'Ginty, on the subject of our late friend's bequest. By his will, you and I have become tenants in common of the plowlands of Drumfeeny, Templemulligan, and Slievelacken. I think it would be highly desirable to divide the property into distinct halves. Should you consent to do so, perhaps you would be so good as to appoint a day upon which you, and your friends, might meet me and my friends on the estate, and mutually agree upon the portions we will each retain."

M'Ginty puffed out his cheeks, placed his foot upon the table, pulled his foraging cap entirely over his left eye, and stared

with the other at Madame O'Carroll—suspicion of some lurking evil motive was strongly expressed in his glance. After this scrutiny had lasted for a minute, he replaced his leg upon the chair, and said,—

"May I ask you, madam, what may be the object of your present proposition? I a'n't a fool, whatever you may think: it wouldn't be so easy to bite me as some folk may suppose."

And he snapped his fingers, to intimate contemptuous defiance of all efforts to entrap him.

"My object," replied Madame O'Carroll, "is to avoid, by dividing the land into separate portions, the confusion and misunderstanding that might possibly arise between two persons having equal control over the same property."

"Well, madam—go on—I am attentive."

"If you and I, for instance," resumed my mother, "should form different views of the best mode of managing the property—a not unlikely circumstance——"

"Well, ma'am—if we should—what then?"

"Why, Mr. M'Ginty, I think the most effectual way to prevent all difficulty and collision, is that each of us should have control over a distinct portion of the estate."

"So then, madam, you opine that we should differ about the management of the property?"

"Why, I think—that is—such an event might possibly occur."

"Then *that* is a conclusive reason, madam, for rejecting your proposal for a division. If you and I should differ as to management, I'll make you conform to *my* mode, or I'll know for what. The female intellect—I mean you no offence—is quite of too gossamer a texture to understand questions about con-acre, improvements in husbandry, or breeds of cattle. I have got a famous bull here—I'll wager a guinea you don't tell me whether he is Devonshire, Norfolk, or Kamschatka.

Your appropriate duties, my good madam, are all in-door, and even there you are sometimes the worse for having matters all your own way. But to manage an estate! Why, my dear lady, you should thank the considerate wisdom of our late worthy friend, for having associated you in the property with one so well able to guide you as I am."

My father, half amused and half offended, was about to make an angry observation, but Julius interposed. "Mr. M'Ginty," said he, "is quite right in the opinion he entertains of his own *sçavoir faire*, which is certainly displayed to great advantage in the condition of the grounds surrounding this house. His present decision is manifestly dictated by concern for Madame O'Carroll's advantage as well as his own; and since he *has* decided, there is no use in saying anything more about it."

"On my honour, Mr. Blake," exclaimed the odd man, "the strong common sense of your sentiments is delightful and re-

markable. My decisions are like the laws of the Medes and Persians—immutable. I am happy to see, too, that Madame O'Carroll takes the matter quite rationally, which I cannot but ascribe to the influence of your example. It is best to submit with a good grace, for there would not be the least use in getting into a fluster.—Pray, madam, and gentlemen, have you any further business with me?"

"None, sir," replied Madame O'Carroll, "since you do not choose to entertain my proposal."

"Then," said M'Ginty, rising, and motioning with his hand towards the door, "it is useless to prolong our interview. You have made your proposition, madam; I have rejected it. That is quite sufficient for your present visit. I hate chit-chat and idle gossip, and you have nothing more to say on business. I always take a nap after dinner, and I am just beginning to feel the luxurious approaches of post-prandial somnolency."

"Sir—sir," stammered The O'Carroll, "this is so odd—so unprecedented—so ungentlemanlike—"

Julius caught my father's arm—"My dear sir, you must make allowances for Mr. M'Ginty's philosophic indifference to forms."

"Sir," said M'Ginty, throwing himself at full length on a hair-covered lounger, and preparing for his *siesta* by putting on a nightcap which he drew from his pocket, "I care but little for your epithets. You have called me odd, because I protect myself from silly gossip—unprecedented, because I make my own comfort and convenience the rule of my actions—ungentlemanlike—Look ye, O'Carroll, do you see those pistols over the mantel-piece? I can do duty upon the sod, man, as well as any bankrupt squire in Connaught. And, hark ye, O'Carroll! I've a trick of my own in matters bellicose—I never wait for *the word*—but fire away slap into any bosthoon who is blockhead enough to call me

out. Adieu, my friends"—(here M'Ginty closed his eyes, and his voice sank into the subdued and broken tone of one just falling asleep)—"Adieu, my friends—I beg you mayn't disturb the soft narcotic influences—Mr. Blake, you have earned a high place in my esteem—Adieu."—A snore closed the sentence—Julius opened the door, and with a restraining hand upon The O'Carroll, rather led than accompanied him out. Mike, who had crouched at the door with his ear at the keyhole, jumped up and stumbled out of the way as we emerged upon the hall. When that confidential domestic had recovered the momentary embarrassment of being detected in the act of listening, he hopped up to Julius, and with a familiar grin upon his face, asked him "If the masther had been civil to the quality?"

"Oh, quite so," answered Julius.

"Troth, I'm glad of that—for he ha such quare ways, that there's no knowing how in the wide world he'll behave him-

self. But if you knew the way to come round him—O! by the hokey—but he's calling me."

"Mike! halloo, Mike!" sounded from the parlour we had just quitted.

"Here, Sir, here!"

"Detain the visitors for one moment," continued the eccentric proprietor of the mansion. In a moment after, M'Ginty's face appeared at the parlour-door. "I jumped up from my nap," said he, "to ask you, O'Carroll, if there's tolerable coursing on those farms that your wife and I have got between us?"

There was a frank joviality in the manner of the querist that disarmed my father's resentment.

"Yes—I believe they are full of hares."

"Very well. I shall be over with my dogs upon Thursday next at Drumfeeny—I'll pass near your house, and I may as well give you a call. That is all I wanted to say. Good bye. Heaven bless you, Madame O'Carroll—heaven bless you, Mr.

Blake—heaven bless you, if possible, O'Carroll. Remember—Thursday next—Drumfeeny." So saying, Mr. Ginty retreated into his sanctuary to finish his nap. Mike winked at our party with an air of high congratulation. "Och, by the powers, yez are all in high favour wid his honour—when he comes out free and asy that way, and says that he'll take acrass the dogs to your house, there's no fear at all but you played your cards well wid him. By dad, genteels, yez are in luck—uncommon luck—howsomever you managed it."

When we were all riding slowly homewards, my father's bile was aroused at the memory of M'Ginty's cool impertinence. "I had the greatest mind," said he, "to insult the fellow to his face."

"Much better not," said Julius; "he would have shied the brandy-bottle at yours."

"The man's as mad as a March hare," proceeded The O'Carroll.

"Just so," said Julius, "and therefore

I highly appreciated your good sense in taking no notice of what he said. A scuffle with such a sort of person is a source of neither honour nor profit."

"He has not three grains of common sense!" said my father, who indemnified himself by his disparagement of M'Ginty for the advantages which that gentleman's superior fluency had given him in their recent interview.

"Not he, indeed!" echoed Julius. "That was the reason I acquiesced in his refusal of Madame O'Carroll's proposal. To have argued with him would have only confirmed his obstinacy. As he means to come to Castle Carroll, you may perhaps accomplish your purpose by dexterous management."

"Do you know who is his next of kin?" asked my mother, after a pause.

"He is second cousin to the Ballywhack Trenches, and he has doubtless got obscure M'Ginty connexions without end. But he hates the Trenches, because they

are too grand for him, and he hates the M'Gintys, because they are too shabby. I don't know who may be his heir-at-law, if he dies intestate."

"He has neither chick nor child," said my father. "Why the deuce should he not leave his moiety along with the rest, whenever he hops the perch?"

"Well—what said I this morning? Did I not advise you to domesticate the madman, who, I daresay, after all, is not thoroughly unmanageable, if one could find out his assailable side? He is probably one of those whose bark is worse than their bite; and if he were established at Castle Carroll as one of the family, it is not impossible he might make my friend Maurice his heir."

My father laughed, and said that such an arrangement would be highly desirable, if it could be brought about. I believe that scarcely any mode of getting money would have just then appeared to him undesirable; for his finances were in such a

deplorable state that my mother's recent acquisition, had she relinquished the control of it to her husband, would have only been, at best, a temporary relief. O, unthrift, extravagance, and debt! what humiliation, what mental misery, do ye not entail upon your victims! Give me the humble home of honest, frugal, industry, into which no clamorous creditor intrudes himself—give me that lowly, happy home, a thousand-fold rather than the gilded palace from which the just claimants on the master's purse are only excluded by a constant succession of degrading expedients! My father was naturally proud; and bitter must, indeed, have been the necessity that could bend his haughty mind to regard with complacency the project of boarding in his house an unmanageable bedlamite, on the prospect that our paltry manœuvres might induce the crazy inmate to bequeath his wealth among us. Madame O'Carroll listened silently. She knew that if M'Ginty could be induced to reside at Castle Carroll,

the sum he might allow for his board would afford her a welcome and needful addition to the current fund for housekeeping. Whether the eccentric prize could be secured, was yet but matter of conjecture. The events of the next few weeks resolved our doubts.

When we were within a few fields of Castle Carroll, old Martin suddenly presented himself at a turn of the road, with alarm pourtrayed in his countenance. "Och, master dear!" cried the ancient domestic, "them scoundrels are dodging about here again, though I thought we had them fairly hunted out of the place. There's three parties of them watching your honour—one at the ould bridge, and two more of them at the Cussaun-cowm and Mick Dempsey's cow-house—I'm sure they got the hard word that your honour was out—Och, weirasthrua! you'll be caught as sure as a gun, if you don't skelp home through the scrub, aud whip in unknownst by the kitchen door."

The O'Carroll did not wait for a repetition of this counsel. He faced his steed at the next fence, and, avoiding the road, dashed right across the country to the scrub, and surreptitiously entered his castle at the postern indicated by his major-domo. He was fortunate enough to escape the sheriff's men, one of whose parties we encountered on our return. They looked blank enough as we passed, having doubtless expected to find the O'Carroll among us.

CHAPTER VIII.

"What spurr'd thee, friend, that thou art here at dawn."—*Herbert Smith.*

NEXT morning, long before breakfast hour, we were much surprised by the appearance of Mr. M'Ginty, who galloped furiously up to the house, sprang from his horse, and, on being admitted, rushed into the parlour in a state of violent excitement. For several minutes he was too much agitated to speak; but at last he exclaimed,

"Women are the most infernal plagues of human life. If they haven't intellect enough to be of use, they have cunning enough to be as mischievous as monkeys."

"How have they incurred your displeasure?" inquired my father.

"Egad I was right," pursued M'Ginty, unheeding the question, "to indicate my appreciation of the female character, by selecting the fourth of August for my marriage, which I did just five-and-thirty years ago."

"Why did you select that day for your wedding?"

"Because it was the anniversary of the Battle of Blenheim; and because I deemed that the anniversary of a battle was the most appropriate day I could select for entering upon wedlock, which is necessarily a condition of warfare. When the reasonable animal is yoked with the unreasonable, the connexion must incessantly elicit the pugnacity of both."

"But what have the women been doing to you since yesterday?"

"My two jades of cousins, Bell Trench and her sister Bessy—I am morally confident it could have been nobody else—the vixens were so disappointed at the reception I gave them when prowling for a

legacy, that by way of revenge they got into my bedroom through the window, and filled my sheets with thistletops. When I got into bed I thought the devil had seized me. I roared with pain, and summoned Mike—a valuable creature is Mike; knows my ways to a miracle!—and it took him three hours to extract all the prickles. Not one farthing of mine shall the minxes ever handle. My cousins, forsooth! What care I for a pair of damsels who I know would never acknowledge the relationship, only for their shabby speculations on my purse?"

"You have not breakfasted," observed my father.

"No—and the morning air has sharpened my appetite."

My mother now appeared, and her bland and courteous manner seemed to restore to the odd man the complacency which had been so sorely disturbed by the frolic of Bell and Bessy. He ate moderately, and was perfectly silent whilst his meal lasted.

When it was over, he renewed his censure of the sportive delinquents, who, he said, inherited their taste for practical jokes from their mother.

"As for me," said he, "I hate violence. I love the amenities of life. In fact, it was because I rarely found them in the world that I secluded myself from general society."

My mother took an opportunity of asking M'Ginty if he wished to look over their farms that day.

"Why, yes, my good madam. I think I may as well. Unhappily I have not brought my dogs. The outrage committed by those women knocked everything out of my head. When I mounted my horse this morning, I had no very definite notion of where I was going. It was chance as much as anything else that sent me here. The concatenation of a man's ideas is quite broken when his thighs are full of prickles. I am still smarting very severely," continued the aggrieved man, slapping the affected parts with his hands

to allay the irritation. My mother expressed sympathy, and M'Ginty told her she was a very favourable specimen of her sex; provided always that her suavity was of every-day practice, and not merely assumed in compliment to him, as a stranger. She took this in excellent part; and about noon we set off to inspect the farms of Drumfeeny, Templemulligan, and Slievelacken. The O'Carroll was not of the party; his recent unhappy experience compelled him to adopt the precaution of remaining within doors.

Julius Blake joined us on the road, and M'Ginty greeted him with enthusiastic cordiality. I had brought greyhounds, and we had some excellent coursing, as the hares were abundant. M'Ginty was in high good-humour, and on his return dined at Castle Carroll. None of our party had, during the day, alluded to the partition of the commonty. After dinner my mother timidly ventured to renew her request to that effect.

"Don't mention it, good madam!" cried our guest. "I beg you may not name such a thing. The more I see of your bland and womanly demeanour, the more I experience of your winning urbanity, the less can I tolerate the notion of any partition of our interests. No, madam—name it not. I deem it an honour, my good lady, to be associated with you. An honour—mark my words—a pride, a satisfaction. Divide our interests? No, my worthy madam. Discharge the truant notion from your head. If you wish me to part company, you and my other friends here should not have made yourselves quite so agreeable.—Pray, are *you* the artificer of this marmalade? It is one of the most meritorious conserves I ever tasted. This is the species of accomplishment in which I delight to see a woman excel."

Julius amused himself by humouring M'Ginty's eccentricities, and became such a favourite that the hour wore late before that gentleman thought of taking his de-

parture. It was nearly midnight when he called for his horse; and we then discovered that the rain was so violent that Mr. M'Ginty could not brave its inclemency. Down it came in pailfuls, the storm constantly increasing. Of course we were obliged to offer our guest a bed. He accepted the offer, and seemed quite delighted with the snugness of his little bedroom, which, although scantily furnished, was rendered cheerful by a bright turf fire. Julius and I accompanied him to his dormitory. In five minutes he was in bed. I quitted the room; Julius soon followed to the drawing-room, which my mother had not yet left.

"I can tell you this," said he, "that if you have the least desire to secure the madman as an inmate, he is well inclined to gratify you. He will probably make the proposal himself. If it comes from you, he will, I suppose, reject it. Better leave him to himself, and—*alors comme alors.*"

"He would be a very troublesome and

disagreeable inmate," said my mother with a sigh.

"Now that is so selfish of you, Madame O'Carroll!" exclaimed my father, who, having been unusually civil to his wife all day, felt now entitled to indemnify himself for his unwonted complaisance. "You always consider *yourself*, and you only think of the inconvenience of providing a few additional necessaries for a new inmate. Pray think a little, also, of the advantages that perhaps might result to your son from this wealthy person's residence here. Do, I beg, have some consideration for your family."

"Why, what would you have, O'Carroll? Did I say that I would not receive him? Do you want me to declare I am charmed at the prospect of such an agreeable companion?"

"Perhaps M'Ginty may not make the offer after all," said I, willing to end the altercation.

We soon retired for the night: parson

plained that the bed assigned for him was damp. We remained awake until day-break conversing *de omnibus rebus*; and it was in the course of that night's talk that I first discovered—what was destined to affect my own career to some extent—that Julius Blake was a struggling and embarrassed man. I grew the more attached to him for the confidence he placed in me. There was about him a bonhommie that looked extremely like goodnature, and might well be mistaken for it, even by wiser and more experienced observers than I was.

CHAPTER IX.

"*Nose.*—Some Protestant, I warrant you—a time-server."—BEN JONSON, *Time Vindicated.*

ON the following morning Mr. M'Ginty slept late. Having none of his own toilette appliances, he borrowed my father's razors. At breakfast he praised his dormitory, and protested it was a perfect bijou of a bed-room.

"I hope you shaved agreeably," said The O'Carroll.

"Why no—your razors were rather the worst of your chattels; they never would seduce a man into suicide, like a charming pair of razors which an officer in Bodkin's regiment once told me would make it quite a luxury to cut one's throat with them. Yours have a nasty trick of shaving the skin *off* and leaving the hair *on*."

"I am surprised at that," said Julius, "for I think I saw your inimitable Mike sharpening them against the hall-door steps this morning."

"That is a slander against Mike—'a weak invention of the enemy'—but, in sober truth, the edge was little better than a billhook."

"Then you should have tried the back," returned Julius.

M'Ginty laughed at our reverend friend's waggery. He was evidently well disposed to look with favour upon all Julius said or did.

Breakfast was ended; but our guest evinced no desire to depart. He found my mother so polite, and Julius so agreeable, that the hours rolled away uncounted. He possessed a good deal of scattered information—the odds and ends of history, biography, philosophy, divinity, in a scrambling irregular sort of way. All his lore was stamped in its passage through his brain with his own essential eccentricity.

He found Julius quite *au fait* at the various topics which he broached. He addressed a few remarks to my father, but found his replies so unpromising that he soon turned away from him with a contemptuous "humph."

My father never pleaded ignorance on any subject; and he accordingly entered upon all the topics introduced by M'Ginty with an air of perfect information. He had turned Protestant to save his estate from the operation of the penal laws; and M'Ginty, in allusion to this circumstance, had addressed him as an excellent authority on controversial divinity. All that my unlucky sire really knew about the matter was, that his lands were imperilled should he continue a Catholic; that he could protect them from the gripe of the "reformed" relation, who threatened a bill of discovery, by the simple process of becom- a Protestant; that the parson was an excellent fellow who could swallow six bottles of claret at a sitting, and, therefore, a

much better companion than the timid and retiring priest who never hunted, and never got drunk.

Upon these important considerations, my parent had abjured his Popish errors —with an indistinct feeling, however, that he might yet be roughly handled in the world to come for his tergiversations in this.

M'Ginty abruptly asked The O'Carroll why he had turned Protestant? The question, considering the party to whom it was addressed, was sufficiently perplexing. Finding that no immediate reply was forthcoming, M'Ginty suggested that perhaps he had conformed because of the superior morality of the Protestant system.

"Yes, yes," responded The O'Carroll, much relieved by the suggestion. "Just so. It was because of the superior morality of the Protestant system."

"Then," rejoined M'Ginty, speaking through his teeth, and grinning sarcastically at the convert, "you embraced the

moral dogma of the illustrious Luther, who, with a select body of his reformed *confréres*, gave formal sanction to Philip of Hesse to have two wives at the same time!"

"He was a curious Philip, whoever he was," said my father, with a laugh, "if he did not find *one* wife quite enough for him!"

"Your chosen patriarch—the apostle of your adoption," continued M'Ginty, not heeding the interruption, "preached up, to be sure, a most seductive code of morals—'*Si nolit domina, veniat ancilla*'—eh, O'Carroll? What say you to *that*, man?"

"Admirable! capital!" responded my father, upon whom the import of the Latin quotation was lost; but who did not wish to appear inapprehensive of its meaning.

"Perhaps," resumed M'Ginty, "the superior tolerance of Protestantism was what induced you to come over."

"Certainly, Mr. M'Ginty—and an excellent reason, too, you must admit."

"And one of which the cogency is so

strongly exemplified in your own proper person, O'Carroll: you were coaxed by the tolerance that would not allow you to keep your estate, unless you said your prayers under the apostolic feathers of M'Grail's wing."

"And an excellent person is M'Grail; a top-saywer about matters of religion and devotion, and things of that sort: you cannot deny *that*, Mr. M'Ginty."

"Pish, pish! why, good lack! here is a man that can render a reason for the faith that is in him! Tolerance! nay, by all that's comical, but this is too ridiculous! Here is a convert who was persecuted out of his old faith (if, indeed, he ever had any!) and he alleges the *tolerance* of the system, by which he was coerced into tergiversation, as his reason for adopting that system!"

"Sir, sir; this is quite too, too impertinent!"

Julius checked my father, by a pressure on the arm, at the same time whispering,

"Don't mind the man O'Carroll; he is not worth your resentment."

"He's as mad as a March hare!" muttered my father, relapsing into a surly quiescence.

"Tolerance!" continued M'Ginty, starting up from his chair, and emphasising his words with very passable oratorical gestures; "why, man! dost thou know that thy great ecclesiastes, Luther, thus exhorted the rapine-loving princes of Germany to *tolerate* the Catholic peasantry, 'Forward, princes! forth to arms; strike and pierce! the marvellous time has come, when a prince can more easily merit heaven by destroying peasants, than other men can earn it by their prayers.' Know'st thou that *this* was the exhortation of thine arch-champion, Luther?"

"I am certain you slander him," returned The O'Carroll, "for all his family were remarkable for their humane and kindly dispositions; that is, if, as I presume from his name, he be anything to

Jack Luther, of Lutherstown, in the county Tipperary; as good and kind-hearted a fellow as ever breathed, and particularly charitable to the poor: the family were all so. Many a merry carouse Jack and I have had together; there wasn't a pleasanter house than Lutherstown kept within twenty miles of Thurles."

"A bright boy, this!" said M'Ginty, apart to Julius Blake. "How is it that *you* have been his companion for years, and have taught him no better?"

"You appear, Mr. M'Ginty," said Julius, "in a very unprotestant humour, this afternoon. Since the force of your sarcasm is levelled at our friend's conversion, one might fairly ask, — Are *you* a Protestant?"

"Sir, you intend that question as a *poser*. I am neither Protestant nor Catholic. I don't find the word 'Protestant' in Scripture, from Genesis to Revelations; nor does the sacred volume contain the word 'Catholic,' either. Sir, I am a Scrip-

ture Christian; I follow no banner, I accept no party designation, of which I cannot find a trace in Scripture. My motto is, 'Cheap religion, and every man his own parson!' With the Bible in my hand, the deuce is in it, if I cannot provide for my salvation, as well as if I had a whole legion of priests, parsons, M'Grails, Macnamaras, and Blakes, growling over my soul like a lot of hungry tom-cats over an unfortunate mouse!"

The air of wild defiance of all clerical interference, that accompanied these words, was perfectly inimitable.

"You see, he hits *me* there, as well as you," said Julius to my father. "Aye Mr. M'Ginty; and, talking of that, Father Macnamara came here in the first days of our friend's conversion—the honeymoon of his Protestantism, as I may call it—growling over the lost mouse, and trying to frighten him back into popery; but he met his match."

"Aye, aye; so I should suppose. Let

us hear, O'Carroll, how you disposed of the priest."

"I thought he was certainly taking a liberty," said my father. "He asked me several questions upon various points; wanting reasons for this, and reasons for that. I had a short answer to all his questions: I told him to go and ask the government. Egad, I think I had him *there!*" and my father laughed triumphantly at the conclusive nature of the rebuff, by which, as he boasted, he had silenced the priest. It was at this stage of the conversation that M'Ginty gave vent to the scornful "humph!" which put an end to the topic.

CHAPTER X.

"What religion are you of?"
Hyppolito.—"Religion? I'faith, I am a duke."
The New Tempest.

The reader has ere now discovered that I was not religiously brought up. In fact there were but few sources whence I could have derived any religious impressions. My mother was in many respects a well-meaning, moral, and piously-disposed person, who would not knowingly commit an infraction of the divine commands; but whose zeal was not active enough to lead her one inch beyond the mill-round of her own prayers, alms deeds, and other observances. It is true that she now and then said to me something about good people going to heaven, and bad folk going to another place; but she never took pains to impress upon my mind the disastrous

consequences of irreligion and immorality. She satisfied herself, I fancy, with taking it for granted that I would "sow my wild oats," as the phrase is; subside into morality and matrimony together; patch up a sort of peace with the Almighty in virtue of relinquishing the actual practice of vice; take my chance for the saving, genuine repentance of the heart; and possibly stumble into heaven at last through the presumed mercy, or oversight, of the Divine Being.

Then as to my father: *his* religion was in the strictest sense "the religion of the state." He had a vague, general notion that religion was a very proper thing, and that the Lords and Commons knew a d—d deal more about the matter than mere country gentlemen. Twice or thrice a-year he went to church. He always toasted Protestant Ascendancy and the Glorious Memory. He did not regard the established clergy so much in the light of ministers of religion, as in that of a well

paid, respectable class of functionaries, appointed by the state to preach sermons and read prayers. The state appointed magistrates—the state appointed excise officers—the state paid the army—the state appointed parsons. The parson, in his view, was as complete a creation and appendage of the state as any of the rest; he was just as good a fellow as the soldier or magistrate, and a vast deal better than the revenue officer. No doubt there was tithe to be paid; but my father paid none, because he grew no crops: and the agistment act of 1735 had thrown the tithe in all pastoral districts chiefly on the cottier tenantry.

The church establishment,* like every other corrupt carcass, furnished excellent feeding for the hordes of vile and crawling things that it engendered. My father sometimes spoke of making me a parson, when visions of a first-rate rectory and a pack of fox-hounds flitted across his brain.

* I beg to be understood as speaking here merely of the temporal establishment.

A desirable berth for master Hopeful—our estate was out at the elbows, and the church might give me a lift. I might be a dean—a bishop—who could tell? A rochet and buz wig, and a seat in the House of Lords—

"Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!"

These dreams of exaltation, indeed, were chiefly confined to the happy moments when a fourth or fifth bottle was under discussion. Yet in less elevated moods, they would sometimes occur in a mitigated form. Church and State—power, wealth, distinction, and Protestant doctrines. Church and State—army, navy, bench, religion, and so forth.

Thus does the Christian faith become degraded and disparaged in the public mind, and placed on a level with mere human institutions, by the mistaken policy that attaches exclusive emoluments and honours to any one code of belief; and pains, penalties, and disqualifications to any other.

From my parents I could not derive much religious principle. They both talked much, now and then, of their affection for their darling, their only child. My father's fondness was chiefly excited when I took an extraordinary leap on horseback; my mother's, when I brought in hares or wild-fowl for the larder. In virtue of these occasional outbreaks of partiality, they had got the reputation of being excellent parents. Honest M'Grail, the worthy vicar of the neighbouring parish, had once said to Julius, "What fond, good parents the O'Carrolls are! Maurice is a fortunate fellow, in that respect."

"Aye," returned Julius, "they *do* make a splutter about their love for the young gentleman, no doubt. They have the sort of affection for their son that a pair of bears have for their cub. They have got the parental instinct of all animals. But as to the enlightened affection of Christian parents, they know nothing about it. Provided their cub is fed, fattened, and

healthy, they take no care whatever to prevent him from going to the devil. Let us not eulogise that spurious parental affection that takes no heed of the spiritual interests of the offspring."

This commentary was repeated to me many years after Julius uttered it; and at a period when his own parental conduct showed that, however sharp-sighted in discerning the errors of others, he himself deserved the censure he bestowed on the short-comings of my parents. Alas! that censure was not more severe than true.

But the reader may ask if I did not derive some religious instruction from the reverend personage who could thus severely criticise the negligence and incapacity of his friends? From Julius I could certainly have learned to *talk* about religion, and to talk well about it. I could have learned to round a pious sentence with an admirably chosen text of Scripture. I presume not to say that Julius did not feel—for the moment at least—the

pious sentiments he uttered. But somehow there lurked in my mind an unacknowledged impression that the piety of my friend was displayed for effect. I did not doubt that he might *feel* devoutly; but it was perfectly plain that he had not the slightest objection to parade his devotion. In every particular he was fond of display and notoriety. I observed that he often laid traps to ascertain the opinion of others respecting himself. All this was so dexterously managed, that I probably should not have noticed it, if some of these devices had not been used to elicit the estimation in which his piety was held. I framed apologies for Julius, for I was extremely fond of him. I said to myself that he was a clergyman, and that as his clerical influence depended on his reputation as a practical Christian, it was natural he should try to discover what was thought of him. Still, I shrank from the notion of seeking applause for Christian excellence. It was too like "making broad

the phylacteries." Ignorant and irreligious as I certainly was at the period I write of, yet the instincts of my mind revolted against the idea. I often heard afterwards that the sermons he occasionally preached in Dublin were "blessed unto his hearers;" that he "brought many souls unto the knowledge of the gospel;" but, for my own part, although I might learn the points of horseflesh, or the science of whist in full perfection from Julius, I never could have learned religion. In much of what he said on other subjects, it was often not easy to discover whether jest or earnest predominated; and this uncertainty, in some slight degree, affected what he said about religion.

It was a curious trait in the character of this clever and fascinating man, that, despite his desire for the reputation of ascetic sanctity, he was not averse to have it known that at an earlier period of his life his morals had not been particularly strait-laced. He would sometimes allude, with

an air of the most demure penitence, to the time "when, Heaven help him! his passions had defied the curb of reason and religion." There was a touch of self-complacency in these reminiscences; so that it really seemed as if my incongruous friend was at once desirous of renown in the incompatible campaigns of virtue and of dissipation. It was as though he said, "I am now enlisted, it is true, in the service of Heaven, and a very good soldier I am; yet I also have won laurels in a certain other service; and the distinction I acquired *there*, enhances the merit of my sacrifice in becoming a saint." Ah, my good friend, thought I, I am afraid that your penitence is not quite genuine; if it were, you would be apt to shun these sly reminiscences of past escapades!

Every Sunday I accompanied my mother to the parish church. It was a mean, small building, whitewashed inside, and divided into pews, which were mouldering from damp. The O'Carroll pew was fitted

up with some attempt at pomp. A brass rail ran round it, supporting a red moreen curtain; so that we could screen off our aristocratic devotions from the vulgar gaze at pleasure. But it was not worth our while, for the Protestant roturiers did not muster a dozen. M'Grail, at the time of my father's conversion, and for some years after, had been parish clergyman. But in 1734 he had received an appointment to the neighbouring parish, which included in its circuit the residence of Sir Hyacinth Blake. Our parson was now a Mr. Gollock—a respectable man in many particulars. He had once been in a dragoon regiment, and fought in two or three engagements. He read the prayers with admirable emphasis and cadence, and with the air of a man who felt he was well paid for the duty, and was conscientiously resolved to give the State the full worth of the money. Julius went to hear him preach, and observed he would have made an excellent actor in "genteel comedy."

His sermons were his weak point. He was fond of military metaphors, and applied them injudiciously. The ridiculous effect of their misapplication diverted my attention from much that might have otherwise been heard with profit. During the hunting season, the Rev. Mr. Gollock used regularly to announce, at the close of the service every Sunday, where the hounds were to meet for the ensuing week.* With the exception of this piece of indecorum (for which the habits of the period furnished but too much apology), our pastor was a worthy man, and, in many

* NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—It would seem that this practice existed at a considerably later date than the days of the jovial parson Gollock. I extract the following passage from a work that teems with prejudice against papistical Ireland; Glassford's "Notes of Three Tours in Ireland; Bristol, 1832." Mr. Glassford tells us, at p. 221, that at the period of his last visit, church matters were so much improved, that there was "no danger of hearing, as I was assured when first in Ireland might have been heard in some places, an impious profanation of the reading-desk, by actual announcement from it of the places in the parish where the foxhounds were appointed to assemble for the following week."

points, merited the good opinion of his neighbours.

M'Grail, our quondam parson, and now the vicar of the parish in which Sir Hyacinth Blake resided, was far superior to the ex-dragoon. He spoke home to the heart; and there was in his holy life that exquisitely beautiful simplicity, equally remote from levity and cant, which gave force and weight to the plain truths he unaffectedly delivered. I very seldom heard him, for my mother was offended when I did not escort her to our parish church; and moreover, on the rare occasions when I formed one of M'Grail's auditory, Emily Blake looked so pretty on the opposite seat, that she more than divided my attention with the good pastor.

Such was the condition of my spiritualities when we were manœuvring to domesticate Mr. M'Ginty at Castle Carroll. I know not whether the detail may interest the reader; but I have given it—because it interests myself, and because the impressions I then entertained, recurred with

great force to my memory, when, at a much later period, I arrived at sounder views. I like to trace the gradual transition from ignorance and uncertainty to what I may term, at least by comparison, some degree of religious information.

One evening I was sauntering along the sea shore; it was on a Saturday. The sky was beautifully clear, and the sun was sinking in full splendour into the Atlantic. Close to the beach, nooked in between two hills, was the humble parish chapel where the Catholics stealthily offered their proscribed devotions. It was thatched, and the broken panes on the weather side were repaired with slates to exclude the rain and wind. It bore manifest traces of being in truth the temple of a poverty-stricken people. The door was open; and curiosity, blended with some other undefinable sentiment, induced me to enter. My father had conformed to the state-faith prior to his marriage with my mother, who had been a Miss Crumpe, the daughter of a

three cheers for Cromwe

rich Cromwellian country gentleman. Never until now had I stood within any place of worship unconnected with the established church. Every thing around me looked mean, shabby, and decaying. The altar and its rails were composed of rough unpainted deal timber, and the carpenter's work was of the coarsest description. The portions of the wood that came in contact with the walls and floor were mouldering from the dampness of the place. The building was so badly lighted by its miserable windows, that I did not immediately perceive that a figure knelt beneath the shadow of one of the confessionals that adjoined the altar steps. I was first made aware of the presence of an observer by the whispered exclamation, quite close to my ear,—

"And is this yourself, Master Maurice? Wisha—God be praised!—what brings you here?"

I at once recognized Jerry Brien as the speaker.

"Curiosity," I answered; "I wanted to

see what sort of place you had got to say your prayers in."

"Curosity?" said Jerry. "Ah, Masther Maurice, dear, curosity is but a poor rason to bring a man into God's house. Now that you are in it, howsever, maybe you might do worse than say a prayer or two? And who knows but God might show his mercy by drawing you back among us, like your honour's ould forefathers for forty generations."

"I thank you for your zeal, dear Jerry; but you seem to forget that *my* religion is better than *yours*. You know that we Protestants improved upon popery, and made out a much better religion for ourselves."

"Och, murdher! and is that the lesson they've taught you?"

"Yes, Jerry. I have often heard my father say so after dinner."

"Ah! his honour has a right to praise his new religion after dinner anyhow. Only he joined it, he wouldn't have had a dinner to ate——"

"Don't talk of my father, Jerry——"

"I mean your honour no offence," he interposed.

"I know you don't. But tell me what were you doing here yourself?"

"I came to confess to my namesake, Father Jerry—God help us, we are laden with sin!—he left the chapel not five minutes before your honour walked into it."

"A poor enough place it is," said I, looking round. "Pray whose seat is that on the other side of the altar, railed off by itself?"

"That is my Lady Blake's."

"Ah! and so it is here she comes to attend mass?"

"Every Sunday and holiday in the year, your honour."

"I wonder," said I, "that Sir Hyacinth allows her."

"No more he wouldn't, only he can't help it. He tried to put a stop to her coming here; but my lady, who is as mild as a lamb about everything else, fought his

honour stoutly about that. Not that he'd have cared a button for her fighting, if it wasn't that she has got some private string about his neck; what it is, I can't say; but she swore she'd pull the string if he thwarted her about her religion."

"He's a wilful man at any rate," said I.

"He's a great ould Turk!" ejaculated Jerry. "I'll never forget the affront he put upon my brother's corpse."

"I hope you have forgiven him for that," said I.

"I hope I have. I am sure I would not do him any harm. Och! if we did but consider how much God has to forgive ourselves, we couldn't refuse to forgive our fellow-creatures."

I was struck with the sentiment, and the honest simplicity with which it was uttered.

"Is not Sir Hyacinth a very tricksy sort of gentleman?" I asked Jerry.

"Och, as to that, we all say he's six times as cute as Mr. Julius. He'd steal the cross from a jackass's back."

I laughed at this novel illustration of "cuteness," which Jerry pronounced with the utmost seriousness.

"Whisht, will you? whisht!" he whispered, pressing my arm with his hand; "there's some of the neighbours in the sacristy yet, and I would just as lief they didn't hear us."

We rose to walk away, and as we left the chapel, Jerry added, "I hope you are not offended, master Maurice, at what I said about your honour's father. But, upon my word, I cannot help telling you this—that I never see my Lady Blake saying her prayers so devout every Sunday, without wishing that Miss Emily and your honour was kneeling alongside of her."

I made no answer, but retraced my homeward way along the sea-shore. Twilight was deepening into night. The wind had risen, and swept fitfully over the wild waters. I felt the incipient influence of a new emotion in my soul. For the first time in my life, my heart was stirred up

into anxious musings upon deep and mighty interests.

How often will an incident, apparently trivial, waken up a train of thinking that may sway the character and influence the future career! Such an incident was my accidental meeting with Jerry in the chapel. There were qualities in this uneducated peasant that had challenged my notice and won my affection. In every rustic sport and trial of activity or strength, he was pre-eminently skilful. He had a manly frankness and sincerity of manner that preserved him from sycophancy in the company of his superiors. He was totally free from profanity of language. I had never heard him, even by inadvertence, utter an oath or curse; and, to me, this merit was the more remarkable, from the contrast it formed with the language of the jolly squires and squireens who daily gathered round my father's board.

As we walked together on the beach, it occurred to me that Jerry, *malgré* his

superstitious faith, exhibited more of the spirit of religion than those to whose guidance my lot had committed me at at home. I had found him on that evening engaged in a duty of his religion. I had, to be sure, an idea that his creed was corrupt, and that, because of its errors, the State had found it necessary to impose certain penalties on its professors. This idea I had gathered, piecemeal, from my father's Protestant toasts (which formed, in truth, my chief manual of controversial knowledge), as well as from the more sober *morçeaux* of politico-divinity let fall from time to time by Parson Gollock, Jack Walsh, our parish rector, and one or two others. But the very best of them (always excepting M'Grail) had failed to impress me with that sense of the reality of devotion which I derived upon the present occasion from my friend Jerry Brien. Jerry had made no parade of piety. That I found him at prayer before the humble altar, was the accident of my entrance.

When his prayer was finished, he was ready to enter upon ordinary subjects with me; yet, from the well-spring of his heart, came forth the fervent wish that I might adopt the belief which he had learned to suppose was the most acceptable to God; and the utterance of this wish bore with it the manifest traces of piety to heaven and affection to myself. I mentally said that whether Jerry's creed were right or wrong, I should scarcely suspect him of renouncing it to save an estate.

But it was not speculations on the doctrinal differences between us that occupied my mind. Of doctrines I knew nothing; and I am sure that poor Jerry, with all his attachment to his faith, would have made a very indifferent controvertist. The thought that filled my heart was a vague, yet not unholy homage to the Deity. I looked abroad on the dark sky, on the dim forms of the mountains, on the indistinct expanse of ocean; and, as I gazed at the majestic works of God, I felt

as though He spoke to my soul in the wild voices of the wind, and the rolling murmurs of the sea, telling me that He was not a respecter of persons; that the prayers which ascended from the lowliest shed would meet as ready an acceptance with Him, as those which were sent up from the stately palace or the proud basilick. That evening was an era in my life; I had never before *felt* that I stood in the sight of God: I began to feel it now. I had seen that the humble peasant at my side, in his rough way, felt the all-pervading presence of the Deity; and I wished that the hallowed feeling might yet be experienced by those whom I loved, and who, alas! possessed it not. I inly rejoiced in my new emotions; I felt as if some glorious privilege, from which I had been previously excluded, were henceforth to be placed within my reach; and it was with a wondering sort of satisfaction that I acknowledged that the privilege of devotion, which was new to *me*, had already been conferred upon my peasant-friend—

upon the humble rustic, so much my inferior in the world's eye! This reflection increased my attachment to Jerry. I said to myself, "God loves him, and therefore *I* will love him."

The solemn hour was favourable to devotional thoughts. Whether my companion guessed what was passing through my mind, I know not; but, contrary to his usual habit, he preserved unbroken silence as we walked along; he accompanied me to the avenue leading up to my father's house, and then in a low voice bade me good night, as though he feared to interrupt my meditations.

"Jerry," said I, taking his hand, "do not tell anybody that you saw me in your chapel this evening; it might not only vex my father, but frighten him about the law."

"I won't surely," replied Jerry, raising my hand to his lips, and respectfully kissing it. "It is long till *I* hurt ye, dear! May God bless and keep you, ever and always, Masther Maurice."

I know I have been prolix, in detailing the incidents of this (to *me*) memorable evening; but I could not help it. We love to connect the visible with the invisible; to recal the external circumstances that have accompanied our reception of any important or remarkable impressions; and at this distance of years my remembrance is as strong and vivid as of yesterday, of the wild sea-coast, the dark hour, and the rushing tide of hallowed thought that impelled me to worship God at his own mighty altar of nature; to derive from the inanimate works of the creation lessons of love and piety; and from an humble peasant, the lesson that true devotion is the breathing of the spirit—not a task of the lips.

I often, alas! fell away from my first enthusiasm; yet the memory of that evening ever came upon my mind as a heavenly spell, to chide me for my backslidings, and cheer me onwards in my better efforts.

CHAPTER XII.

"Ecce iterum Crispinus!"

NEXT day M'Ginty came again. He told us he had taken a dislike to his own house ever since the night he had lain upon the thistley couch prepared for him by thewaggish malic of Bell Trench and her sister. There was now no doubt that they had done the evil deed. They had boasted at Ballymore of the success of their conspiracy against the odd man's slumbers; and the exploit so tickled Sir Hyacinth's fancy, that he loudly protested Bell was a trump! and made her tell the story to every visitor that came to his house. Deep and deadly was the vengeance vowed by M'Ginty when these glorifications of his fair tormentors were conveyed to his ears. He said little indeed, but that little showed how deeply the affront had wounded him,

and how vigorous was his resentment. He now became a constant guest at Castle Carroll. My mother had the art to suppress the exuberant jollity of the dinner table, in which she was blessed, for once in her life, with the co-operation of her spouse, who feared that M'Ginty would shrink from becoming our inmate unless our festivities were tamed down more nearly to a level with the quietude to which the eccentric man had so long accustomed himself. It was not to be doubted that he could be gradually trained, if needful, to the jovial rules of Castle Carroll.

A fortnight passed. Mr. M'Ginty repeatedly came. A month elapsed; his visits were continued; yet, despite certain indirect intimations of his wish to reside with such delightful people as he found us, he never formally proposed to do so. My mother's patience was rapidly ebbing.

"The horrid man keeps me in a constant flutter," said she. "I wish he would do either one thing or the other. Worse

than fail we can't, and I really think, after all he has hinted, I may very fairly make the proposition to him."

"Do no such thing," said Julius, who, as usual, was one of the council; "if you do, then depend on it, he will be off like a shy horse; and moreover he will tell every one you would have trepanned him, only that his vast sagacity enabled him to escape your devices. Wait a little—a very little longer."

Very little longer indeed did we need to wait; for the next morning, before day break, Mr. M'Ginty rode furiously to the door, foaming at the mouth, bellowing with rage, and cursing with awful ferocity. His excitement on the former occasion had been calmness itself, compared with the commotion he now displayed. He realized one's notions of a demoniac. His veins were swollen; his eyes shot fire; his words were unintelligible with passion. The noise of his furious knocking had wakened up my father and the servants;

and when the former addressed some inquiries to him on his entrance, he hastily pushed past, and rushing to the bed-room he had formerly occupied, he bolted and double-locked the door, stamped about the apartment for some time as if to work off his rage, and when fairly exhausted, flung himself upon the bed, where he slept until breakfast hour.

When he appeared at our morning meal it was with difficulty we could hear with grave faces his angry complaint that Bell Trench had repeated her former malpractices. Yes. The sanctity of his bed had again been desecrated—again had the sheets been stuffed with thistle tops, and the prickles had again been extracted by the invaluable Mike. How or when the adventurous damsel had spirited herself into his dormitory, he could not possibly conceive. She must, he said, deal with the devil, and possess the power of invisibility. He had left strict directions with Mike to watch all suspicious interlopers,

and to slap off a gun at the Miss Trenches in especial, should they again be caught in the fact of a trespass.

"A dangerous sort of man for an inmate, this Mr. M'Ginty," said I to myself. I was wiser than my seniors, for his savage language did not seem to impress them with any other idea than that of the speaker's eccentricity.

"I have been thinking these some weeks of coming to live with you all," said our guest. "Eh? how d'ye all like that?"

We were all silent—my mother made a grave inclination of her head.

"Eh? you like it? Oh, yes. I knew you couldn't possibly object. No, no. You could not. So that's settled.—Well—the next thing is—how much I should cost you.—I have in general a moderate appetite. I like plain dishes. I hate expensive kickshaws. I am very fond of well-saved bacon. Bacon and beans are a dish for a prince. In an ordinary Dublin tavern, they'll dine you excellently well for

two shillings. If you are vinously given, you pay extra. I know your cellar's full of smuggled claret. As to breakfast, if cold meat be excepted (and I do not often eat meat breakfasts) I think that a shilling a day ought to cover my share of tea and toast. You see I could not cost you very much, and I am sure you are too honest to make any exorbitant charges——"

"Sir," interposed The O'Carroll——

"Sh! sh! sh! Did I tell you I had done speaking?" and M'Ginty impatiently waved his hand to enforce silence. "Never interrupt a man of business until he has finished his say.—The bed-room I slept in upstairs hits my fancy to a miracle. You see I do not disparage my accommodations to bring down the price. 'Tis an airy bed-room, excellently ventilated, and with a capital bed. I like it of all things. Mike makes my bed at home; I do not keep a housemaid. When I come here to live, Mike shall come over every day for the same purpose; and as I shall

really have not the least use for your housemaids, they need not be looking for perquisites. Now, tot up all, and see what it comes to. Dinner—I have already said you'll get an excellent dinner at a tavern for two shillings—but say half-a-crown per day—that is £45 12*s.* 6*d.* per annum. Wine—let me see—Come, d—n it! I'll be generous—I will allow you another half-crown for wine, although I know I shall frequently drink less than half-a-pint—that is £45 12*s.* 6*d.* more. Then a shilling for breakfast is £18 5*s.* per annum, and my nice, snug bed-room, and the use of the parlour—these accommodations I should have for—for ——"

"For a hundred a-year," said my mother.

"Oh, madam, pray have a conscience!"

"One hundred per annum is the very lowest," persisted my mother, who felt conscious that her best chance of profit lay in these particular items.

M'Ginty paused for a moment, and then said, "I won't break your word, my good

madam. One hundred be it. But positively you will mint money by me. Do not suppose I am unconscious of that. You don't know, either, how often I'll bring in hares and game to fill the pot. Ah—I'll be a mine—a regular gold mine to you," he continued; "besides which, you will have my conversation, a source of amusement and enlightenment. Was ever inmate in a family the herald of greater advantages to his host and hostess? Why, I'll rub up your minds—scour the rust from your intellects, and put money in your pockets; unlike that blackguard German baron, who advertised in the Dublin papers that he would accept invitations to dinner, and converse on any subject or in any language that might be required, at the reasonable charge of five shillings per entertainment."

"Maurice is a very good shot," said my father, "and needs no aid in filling the pot."

"We shall have trials of skill, then,"

replied M'Ginty, rubbing his hands with great glee at having got over the ceremony of his proposition.

"Now we will put our arrangements on paper, if you please," said my mother. "Two hundred a-year will cover everything." M'Ginty consented without offering any opposition. Jack Walsh witnessed the agreement.

Julius arrived about noon. I told him what had happened, and how M'Ginty's person had again been assailed with the thistly weapons of the unseen foe.

"Whom does he suspect?" asked Julius.

"Miss Trench, of course; who else?" replied I. But the slightest possible smile of conscious and gratified trickery that curled on the lips of Julius, led me to suspect that he, and not Miss Trench, had perpetrated this second infraction on the sanctity of M'Ginty's bed. Julius did not utter one word that could commit him; yet I am sure I was right in this surmise. He was fond of sly mischief, provided he

could escape detection; and on this occasion he had the stimulant of devising an ingenious scheme to precipitate the odd man's proposal to reside at Castle Carroll. To disgust M'Ginty with his own domicile, Julius would not have hesitated to play off more serious practical jokes than this, if a decorous secrecy could have been secured. How he managed to escape detection—whether his operations were performed in person or by proxy, I know not; but, at all events, I am convinced that the second edition of the thistle-conspiracy was contrived by no other than my excellent Julius himself.

CHAPTER XII.

"See that thy wits sleep not in making this bargain: thy adversary is a keen one and a wary."

The Rival Sharpers.

Two years passed, during which our household was certainly bettered by my mother's careful management, backed by the regular payment of Mr. M'Ginty's allowance. Madame O'Carroll could not, indeed, avert the ultimate ruin which my father's extravagant habits had long since rendered inevitable; but she postponed the evil day, and kept some of the creditors at arms' length with small advances. We still lived in a state of siege, the lower windows being well secured with iron stanchells, and the outer and inner hall doors being carefully chained and locked, to guard against surprise. The entrance and egress of visitors as well as inmates

was preceded by a rigid scrutiny of the premises. A son of our invaluable major-domo was constantly posted in a bartizan to reconnoitre; and since the arrival of M'Ginty, our warder usually whiled away many of the tedious hours of his daily watch by playing at five-and-forty with Mike.

The reader is already aware that my father was now unable to go out, unless on Sundays; and as the poor chief, in order to recompense himself for this imprisonment, drank harder and deeper than ever, it seemed not unlikely that his potations, acting on a constitution undermined by anxiety and the want of active exercise, might materially abridge his existence. His temper was become intolerable, except at those moments when his cares were forgotten in the excitement of a boisterous revel. He gave frequent dinner parties, and his guests were punctual in their attendance, from the benevolent motive assigned by Jack Walsh to Bodkin, "That as

poor O'Carroll was going to the devil, it would be shabby in his friends to desert him. He was making a wonderful fight of it, but it couldn't last for ever; and whenever the poor fellow should be regularly dished, he ought not to have it to say that they didn't stick by him to the last." So they stuck by him as long as his wine maintained its reputation, and would have even patronized his whiskey-punch, I am convinced, had their friendship been reduced to that test.

M'Ginty's domestication, if in one respect advantageous, was at times a most excruciating nuisance. He played all manner of outlandish freaks. He had trained a monstrous turkeycock to perch on his finger, and he was extremely fond of standing at the drawing-room window singing "Sweet Robin!" to his unwieldy favourite. Other frolics were still more annoying than this. One night he heard my mother complain that the housemaid did not rise early enough. As M'Ginty

had disclaimed, *ab initio*, the services of this fair functionary, one would not have thought that her habits of morning indulgence were likely to interest him. But he secretly resolved to avenge my mother's grievances; and next morning the house was startled at the hour of four A.M. by the report of a broadside fired into Mollydusta's bed-room. We found M'Ginty at the door, in his nightcap and dressing-gown, assuring the delinquent that this novel *reveillé* should be repeated, unless she altered her hour of rising to Madame O'Carroll's satisfaction.

The recital of his pranks would be endless. He became such a nuisance, that nothing less than the hope of ultimately acquiring his moiety of the lands of Drumfeeny, &c., could have induced my father to tolerate his continued residence. M'Ginty from time to time gave colour to this hope. He used to say that I was an angelic youth, and that he wished I was his son, in order to leave his estate to me.

My parents' teeth used to water cruelly at these tantalizing declarations. For a long time they used either to receive them in silence, or else to interpose some pretty little modest declaimer, such as, "Oh, sir! you will make Maurice quite too vain with your praise"—or, "Take care, Mr. M'Ginty—you will have to answer for spoiling Maurice." But my father, bolder grown from the tantalizing repetition of these hints, ventured at last to bring our guest to the point. His courage had been stimulated by an extra bottle of old port, and he watched for M'Ginty's usual declaration. It came. Looking at me most affectionately with his left eye (his right being pent beneath the edge of his red foraging cap), he declared that the *ne plus ultra* of human felicity must be found in the possession of such a son as I was—"I wish you were mine, you rascal!" he added in the most insinuating manner; "and what pleasure would I not have in leaving all I possess in the world to you!"

"Well, now, sir," said The O'Carroll, "since you are kind enough to mention such a thing, I hope you will excuse me for saying, that although my poor boy has not the good fortune to be your son, yet I don't see why that need be any effectual bar to your kind wishes in his behalf."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded M'Ginty, with a most ferocious scowl.

"Nay, I should be sorry to broach such a topic if you had not introduced it yourself."

"And you ask me—that is, you plainly and deliberately propose to me to make your son my heir? You propose that, whereas *you*, and not *I*, have begotten this particularly hopeful young gentleman, and squandered his patrimony—*I*, and not *you*, should repair to him the consequences of your wasteful and criminal extravagance? That is the mode in which your proposition shapes itself—eh?"

"Why, I told you," stammered The O'Carroll, very much taken aback by

M'Ginty's unscrupulous severity, "I told you that I—I should have said nothing—nothing at all upon the subject, if you hadn't encouraged us to entertain hopes."

Thus gently, almost submissively, did the proud and impetuous O'Carroll reply to the insolence of his guest. Had any other person offered him the tithe as much impertinence, the immediate result had been a pair of feather springs—twelve paces—and "honourable" bloodshed. But M'Ginty had acquired a strange ascendancy over him, partly arising from his manifest superiority in the frequent encounters of their wits, and partly from his hopes and expectations that I, if our cards were well played, might eventually succeed to the odd man's inheritance. My father had his usual salvo, too, for any supposed compromise of his dignity: "The fellow is quite mad," he used to mutter; "and who would wrangle with a madman?"

"I never encouraged your hopes," said M'Ginty, taking up the last words of The

O'Carroll. "I said I wished the youth was my son, to inherit my fortune. So I do, for he is a good youth, despite bad training. But there is all the difference in the world between leaving him my estate, as matters now stand, and leaving it to him if he were the heir of my name—heigho!" And M'Ginty thereupon looked contemplative, and began to whistle.

"At all events," said my father, who thought that as the ice was now broken, he might as well see out the experiment, "there's your moiety of the lands my wife has."

"Aye—I guessed you had a hankering after those lands. Well now—and what will you say if I *do* devise my moiety of those lands to this precious cub of yours?"

My father's eyes glistened with joy. He felt the triumph of a successful hit: "Why, sir, I shall say that you are the most generous—the most bountiful—in short, the kindest friend—the—"

"Oh, no doubt you would smother me

with blarney. But I'll tell you what it is, O'Carroll; if I *do* devise my moiety of Drumfeeny to your son, trust me I shan't do it for nothing. I must make my own terms. I pay you £200 per annum for living here. My half of Drumfeeny may be worth about £200 per annum. If I secure the succession of that to your son, the least you may do is to keep me here for £100 a year."

Both my parents looked exceedingly awkward at this proposition. "Oh," cried M'Ginty, "I see how it is. You are willing to get all you can out of me. But you won't give. You would *take* £200 a year, but you won't remit one hundred."

"Why, Sir, our finances are unhappily so dilapidated."

"And what's that to me?" broke in M'Ginty. "Surely you do not expect me to give this two hundred a year for nothing?"

"You should consider our relative ability," pleaded my mother. "One

hundred a year would be a ruinous reduction in our means; whereas, double that sum, when *you* will need no earthly appliances—"

"Aye—when I kick the bucket—and you don't care if that was to-morrow. Well—the world is horribly selfish; every day's experience shows me more of it."

"If you said £150 instead of £100," resumed my father, who did not relish the evanishment of the Drumfeeny succession, "hard as times are, we would consent to keep you up for that sum, though no doubt at a good deal of inconvenience."

"Agreed," said M'Ginty. "To be sure I am foolishly generous. Just see what it comes to. It is selling a reversion of two hundred a year in fee simple for ever for a life annuity of £50. Who on earth would do it but myself?"

"And you don't object to make your will accordingly?" said The O'Carroll.

"Not a bit. Do you say it is a bargain?"

My father would have instantly acceded, but Madame O'Carroll had a prudential qualm. The present loss of fifty pounds per annum would be a serious thing; and who could tell but that after having enjoyed the reduction until within a few days of his death, our eccentric friend might not finally alter his will, and devise away all he possessed to the King of Timbuctoo? Her doubts, however, were expressed in guarded and Scriptural language. "A testament," said she, "is of no avail so long as the testator liveth."

My father caught the hint. "Well—a deed," said he, "a deed will be, perhaps, the best mode of giving effect to the wishes of all parties—presuming, of course, that Mr. M'Ginty has no objection."

"Not the smallest!" said the odd man, with a bland readiness that was perfectly ominous. I had never seen him assent to any proposition half so promptly.

"You covenant to pay us one hundred

and fifty pounds during your residence at Castle Carroll——"

"Just so," said M'Ginty with prompt suavity.

"—— And to give your moiety of Drumfeeny and its dependencies in fee to my son, after the term of your natural life."

"Critically right," replied M'Ginty.

"I protest, sir," said The O'Carroll, "your conduct is uncommonly handsome and generous!"

"I am glad you like it," returned our guest, with a dry cough. "We will send for Tony O'Brallaghan whenever you please; and put it all into black and white—sign, seal, and so forth. Does that satisfy you?"

My father, who seldom saw beyond the surface, poured forth a profusion of acknowledgments.

"Say nothing more upon the subject," said M'Ginty, waving his hand with an air of lofty generosity. He continued—

"It *is* a handsome act—but there is nothing I dislike so much as to be overwhelmed with thanks. I like the reality of gratitude: I detest its verbiage. I take all your thanks upon trust. I am ready to believe you would all do as much for *me*. Aye—*that* I do!" repeated he, shutting his eyes, and talking to himself.

"But your conduct, my dear sir, is so noble—so munificent," uttered The O'Carroll.

"Hush! hush! say nothing about it. My conduct is, indeed, all that you say—but you must not, with your ill-timed thanks, disturb the luxury of self-commendation, with which, if you permit me, I now desire to lull myself into my after-dinner nap"

In obedience to this injunction, my father confined himself to one or two pantomimic gestures, expressive of acknowledgment. Mr. O'Brallaghan was sent for in the course of a few days; the deed was drawn, engrossed, and duly executed;

it invested me with M'Ginty's title to the lands, subject to a life annuity to the grantor of the full annual value; and my father took considerable credit to himself for the *sçavoir faire* with which he had contrived to secure such a windfall for me.

CHAPTER XIII.

"*Myrtilla.* How now, what rough-tongued knave is this?"—*The Sharpers.*

Our guest's manners soon became extremely disagreeable to me. I had heretofore been a sort of favourite with him; but now, as he said himself, he partook of that prejudice which certain persons are said to experience against their successors. He became unusually captious and irritable; so much so, that I began to think that I was paying beforehand rather dearly for the benefits of my future succession. There was a good deal of half-suppressed snarling upon both sides; and my tormentor occasionally said, that if it were not that the grant he had executed was irrevocable, he would recal it.

"Take it, sir," said I one day. "I should

infinitely rather forfeit your inheritance than have it perpetually flung in my face."

"No, you silly boy," he answered relentingly; "I am old, and some folk say I am odd; you musn't mind what I say."

One day Sir Hyacinth Blake, who rarely favoured us with a visit, came to pay his respects to my mother. The baronet's presence was seldom the harbinger of good-humour. As my father was compelled to remain a close prisoner in his citadel, Sir Hyacinth tantalized him by describing, with unusual unction, the delights of the last fox-hunt. "We were wishing you had been amongst us, O'Carrol; it was the most glorious burst I saw these six years."

"I wish I had—I wish I could," said The O'Carroll; "my hunting is now, alas! confined within narrower limits."

"So I see. It is a miserable thing, no doubt, to be shut up here like a rat in a trap. If I were you, I would extricate myself."

"How?" demanded the poor prisoner.

"Get into Parliament. Old Joyce is nearly dead—he must leave a vacancy within six months. Stand for the county, and the Ballybrophy fox-club will stick up to you. The Ballybrophy hunt could carry the county with a whistle. If you had but the personal privilege,* what need you care how many bumpkins had your name in their books? As it is, you have made a capital fight of it."

"Alas!" replied The O'Carroll, with rueful glee, "they would say they could not trust me to manage the affairs of the public, I had mismanaged my own so much."

"On the contrary," returned Sir Hyacinth, "when a man has nothing at all of his own left to mind, his time and talents are only the more disengaged to mind the business of the nation. But I see you have got no stomach for the Parliamentary experiment. Last month I chanced to have

* Of exemption from arrest for debt.

ten thousand pounds that I did not know what to do with; so, for want of a better investment, I purchased the borough of Knockrattigan."

"Whom do you mean to make your member—if the question is a fair one?" asked Madame O'Carroll.

"Jack Trench, of Trenchfort," answered the baronet; "an excellent fellow."

"Oho!" cried M'Ginty, speaking for the first time, "I suppose it was his sister Bell who coaxed you to promise him that."

Sir Hyacinth did not condescend to answer.

"A meddling troublesome creature, that Bell Trench!" continued M'Ginty, in audible soliloquy. "A pity 'tis, that she cannot be member for Knockrattigan herself. She has brass enough to face the House of Commons; and I am sure" (with a bow to Sir Hyacinth) "that if she asked to be returned, the patron of the borough could not refuse her."

"Sir," returned the baronet sternly,

"Miss Trench is a lady of merit and distinction. I beg I may not hear her lightly named; the more especially as she is at present my guest."

"I wish you joy of her!" cried M'Ginty; "she would have been *my* guest too, before I came to live here, only that I turned her out of my house. I trust she is as agreeable an inmate to Lady Blake, as she seems to be to *you*, Sir Hyacinth."

"Sir, sir! you are mad—quite mad!" said the baronet, with infinite dignity.

"I cannot retort the compliment," replied M'Ginty, very bitterly; "madness implies the derangement of reason, and you never had any to derange!"

"Come, come, gentlemen!" said my father, interposing with officious bustle; "it is not treating me quite well, to fall out in my house—in my presence. Sir Hyacinth, Mr. M'Ginty did not mean—Mr. M'Ginty, Sir Hyacinth meant nothing offensive;" and forthwith both my parents uttered

the profusion of well-meant nothings, usually pronounced by startled pacificators. M'Ginty became doggedly silent. Sir Hyacinth, notwithstanding his effort to assume a calm and contemptuous exterior, was a good deal excited, whilst he assured my mother, in reply to her earnest remonstrance, that he would dismiss the subject wholly from his mind. My mother, who had great faith in the pacifying efficacy of a good luncheon, placed her hand upon the bell-handle, to ring for refreshments; but M'Ginty, who divined her intention, immediately interposed. He was seated next her, and asked, in a stage whisper, what she was about?

"I am going to order lunch," she answered; "Sir Hyacinth must be hungry after his ride."

"Lunch!" repeated M'Ginty, in the same sort of *aside*. "Madam, you really do not know when to exercise, and when to economize your hospitality."

"Why, you know," returned my mo-

ther with a smile, and her hand on the bell-rope, "you know Saint Paul desires us to practise hospitality, as many thereby have entertained angels."

"Well, madam—but that is nothing to the purpose, for nobody could ever mistake Sir Hyacinth for an angel!" and he forcibly withdrew her hand from the bell-rope.

I felt keenly the humiliation of such whimsical impertinence, for which not even M'Ginty's oddity could afford an excuse. I remembered, too, that Sir Hyacinth was Emily's father; and leaving Madame O'Carroll and her lodger to fight it out as best they might, I immediately repaired to our red-nosed major-domo, Martin, and desired him to place refreshments in the dining-room. Having done so, I returned to our guest, whom I invited to luncheon with as much *nonchalance* as I could assume. M'Ginty bent a keen glance upon me; a glance that apprized

me we were thenceforth to stand upon terms of enmity. He was silent during the remainder of Sir Hyacinth's visit, and when it was concluded he retired to his dormitory, where he probably employed himself concocting some measures of revenge. I tried to calm my indignation by strutting majestically up and down the room; but I cannot say the process proved particularly sedative, for my pride was at once exasperated by the painful indications of our poverty in its worn and faded furniture, and inflamed by the grim ancestral portraits of chiefs and senators which frowned from the walls through the medium of incrusted smoke and dust. There they were in goodly array; successive generations attired in the armour of the sixteenth century—the peaked beard and lovelocks of King Charles—the buff coat of the commonwealth—the profuse wigs and costly laces of the Restoration. There were ancestresses too, amongst whom was the notorious Granua, displaying a face that

would have made her fortune on the stage as one of the weird sisters. "Venerable gentlemen and ladies," exclaimed I, apostrophising the well-smoked lineaments of my progenitors, "great, powerful and distinguished as you were in your day, your descendants are reduced to the degrading necessity of lodging a bedlamite and tolerating his impertinence for what they can make of him."

Swelling with offended dignity, I was about to add something exceedingly melodramatic, when my mother entered to apprize me that she wished to get a few hares. Thus taken down from my heroics, I proceeded to obey my mother's wishes.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Of all the tyrannies on human kind,
The worst is that which persecutes the mind."
DRYDEN.

I ACCORDINGLY sallied forth with the greyhounds, attended by my friend, Jerry Brien, whom I picked up as I passed his cottage. On our way to the brakes of Kildernan, which were renowned for their hares throughout the country, Jerry beguiled the hour with talk. I was sick at heart, after the unpleasant scene at Castle Carroll, and was not in spirits to reply to his observations; in truth, he talked away without my having any very distinct idea of what he said, until my attention was arrested by the words, "that ould scourge of the world, Sir Hycie."

I was going to chide him for this irreverent mention of the knight, for whom, if I respected him on no other account, I at

least entertained forbearance on the score of his being the father of Emily Blake,—when our notice was attracted by a horseman in a drab great coat and glazed round hat, who bent his way to a long, low thatched cottage in the immediate vicinity of the Catholic chapel I have described in a previous chapter. There was something incomparably blackguard in his *tout-ensemble;* a mixture of vulgar impudence, with an expression of a still more revolting description. His countenance bespoke him well adapted to perform all the low and hateful behests of petty tyranny.

"I know that fellow," said Jerry in a low voice; "he is a namesake of my own so far as 'Jerry' goes. His name is Jerry M'Ilroy—bumbailiff, tithe-proctor, driver, and boy-of-all-work to Sir Hycie, Parson Gollock, and half a dozen other honest birds. It is no good errand brings him to the priest's hall-door just now. If there's a shears in Connaught, it's a murdher not

to take the measure of that blackguard's ears wid it."

We had now come up to this multifarious functionary, who touched his hat to me in recognition of my gentry, and then stared at Jerry with an air of malignant scrutiny that seemed to say, "How I'd relish to execute a warrant against a lad of your inches, my boy." He had knocked at the door of the cottage, and receiving no answer, he now knocked again with great impatience. It was opened by a servant woman. "Is Father Macnamara at home?" demanded Mr. M'Ilroy. "He is," replied the woman.

"Tell his reverence to trot out here," said the visitor; "tell him a jintleman is waiting to spake to him."

"A jintleman!" echoed Jerry Brien, unable to restrain his indignation. "Why then, bad luck to you for an impudent rapscallion of a gallowsbird, to call yourself a jintleman!"

The offended functionary retorted with a cut of his whip, which Jerry avoided by nimbly springing aside. Meanwhile the priest came out. He was a middle-aged man, tall, and firmly built, with hair prematurely grey. He wore a large frieze great coat; his dress in every respect resembled much more that of the best class of farmers than anything clerical. It was the heyday of the penal laws, and the Catholic clergy cautiously avoided all assumption of ecclesiastical costume outside their chapels. Notwithstanding the extreme homeliness of the priest's attire, there was that in his bearing, in the glance of his eye, and in the expression of his countenance, that challenged respect.

"What is your business, friend?" he asked the ambassador.

"I am come on behalf of Sir Hyacinth Blake," said Mr. M'Ilroy, strong in the rank and consequence of his principal, "to ax your raverence a question or two. But may be it would be better for all parties to

ax it out of earshot," and he looked at me and Jerry Brien as he spoke.

"Quite the contrary," answered the priest. "Any message you can possibly have from Sir Hyacinth to me may be openly delivered in presence of the parish."

"Why then, Mr. Macnamara, is it thrue that you hunted that purty little girl, Judy O'Shaughnessy, away from the rails of the altar where the creature used to kneel, and tould her in the face of the whole congregation not to come farther forth into the chapel than the door? Is that thrue, Mr. Macnamara?"

"I do not see what business either you or Sir Hyacinth can have with the mode in which I regulate my congregation," said the priest, "and so you may tell him."

"Sir Hycie will make it a blue business to your raverence if you affront his honour inside your chapel, Mr. Macnamara."

"Well, Sir—well—you have had your answer, and I beg you will favour me by departing."

"Not till I deliver my message, Mr. Macnamara. Sir Hycie has a *mehul** for say-sand next Thursday, and he bid ye give it out from the altar, that the boys may have word of it in time. Do the business dacently now, for the last mehul wasn't to say a very good one, and the long *craugh* is to be laid down in clover. You may tell them there will be bagpipes and a dance. That's one thing. And his honour's other ordhers is, that ye don't hindher Judy O'Shaughnessy from kneeling in whatever part of the chapel she plazes. For harkye, Mr. Macnamara, if you aggravate Judy—by gor his honour tould me to say he'd burn the chapel about your ears—and so good bye to you."

It was with the utmost difficulty that I could restrain Jerry Brien during the preceding colloquy from laying violent hands on Sir Hyacinth's ambassador. He actually

* *Mehul*—A gathering of the peasantry to do any work that requires more hands than usual for the landlord. Such work is always gratuitously performed.

trembled with passion. The priest was much more calm. Turning to me when M'Ilroy was gone, " It is a distressing position, Mr. O'Carrol," said he, " in which I am placed. That unfortunate young woman, Judy O'Shaughnessy, was seduced by Sir Hyacinth, and instead of shrinking from the public eye, she used to parade herself, bedizened in finery purchased with the proceeds of her guilt, in the most conspicuous part of my chapel. Of course I could not permit such an outrage upon all decency, particularly as Lady Blake is one of my flock. I ordered her to keep her proper place behind backs at the entrance door, and she has induced her paramour to threaten me in the manner you have heard. As the law gives me no protection, I know not how far that reckless and unprincipled man will execute his threat.

" No doubt he's a man of his word when he threatens to do mischief," said Jerry.

" Your position," said I, " must excite the indignant sympathy of every right-

minded man. Our law-makers in their wisdom have declared that Protestant ascendancy is essential to the well-being of the kingdom. But I am sure they never dreamt of its assuming such a form as this —or rather of its being pushed to such an extent of petty persecution."

The priest smiled, "You are very young, Mr. O'Carroll. When you are more experienced you will find how little the framers of the present persecuting laws cared for anything except securing to themselves the largest amount of tyrannical power."

"The Protestant heads of the kingdom were, and are, afraid of the Catholics," said I.

"Afraid!" repeated Father Macnamara. "In converting *us* into a bugbear, you act, to some extent, like the Indian worshippers of Mumbo Jumbo: you dress up an object of terror, and then are panic-struck at the scarecrow of your own making. Indeed, when confiscations were fresh and recent,

that is to say, some sixty or seventy years ago, one could well understand why those who had forcibly despoiled others of their lands should frame rigorous laws to keep down the victims of their spoliation. But here we are, in the year of grace 1759; and some of the most vexatious of your statutes are scarcely a dozen years old. Now, I cannot, for the life of me, see what you get by keeping us down. Does the tyrannical code in existence secure to the Protestant party a single substantial advantage? No doubt, Sir Hyacinth Blake enjoys the privilege of insulting a priest with impunity; and in a thousand other cases individual tyranny enjoys the luxury of its own exercise. But that is the only good you get by it at this time of day; while, to balance that advantage, trade, commerce, agriculture, and manufactures are all grievously suffering from the crippled condition of four-fifths of the nation. Nay, our very parliament is overridden by the parliament of England, precisely because

it subserves the exclusive interests of a narrow minority, instead of resting upon the basis of the whole Irish people."

"I wish I could do you any good," said I, rather tired of the topic; "I sincerely sympathize with you, and I pity Lady Blake very much."

"Ah, poor Lady Blake!" exclaimed the priest; "her existence would be perfectly insupportable if it were not for the comfort she derives from her angelic daughter."

My heart bounded at those words. I could have embraced Father Macnamara for the warmth with which he pronounced this encomium upon Emily. "She is, indeed, a charming girl," cried I.

"You know her pretty well, I suppose?" inquired the priest.

"Yes; we have often met."

"I fear," he exclaimed in a lower tone, "there is a plot in agitation against her happiness."

My curiosity was strongly excited by these words. I begged Father Macnamara

to explain himself. But, possibly, fearing he had said too much, he declined to communicate more. "They must want her to marry some distasteful suitor," thought I; and forthwith my imagination waxed valiant, and I thought of the mighty deeds I would achieve in order to liberate Emily from such odious thraldom. Fired with the magnanimous resolve to do battle in defence of Miss Blake, whenever, and against what antagonist soever, her interests might demand, I took my leave of Father Macnamara.

Once more *en route* for Kildernan's far-famed brakes, Jerry gave expression to his own speculations on the priest's oracular announcement.

"That was not meant for *your* ears, Jerry," said I.

"Then his raverence should have spoken lower. I have cute ears no doubt. But anybody might have heard that. And now, who does your honour suppose to be plotting or planning against that sweet crature, Miss Emily?"

"I am sure I cannot guess."

"No more can I," resumed Jerry, "if it wouldn't be that ould thief of the world, Captain Bodkin. Though it can't be *him* neither. And if it was the Captain," he continued, correcting his first impressions, "why, upon my conscience, it isn't Miss Emily, but her mother, he'd be looking after."

"Her mother!" exclaimed I, much astonished.

"Aye, so they say—no blame howsever to her ladyship—not the laste in life; it is said—(I don't swear to it, mind,)—but they say that the captain was pushing his freedoms too far, and her ladyship gave him the could shoulder. He was encouraged, 'tis likely, by seeing the way that ould Turk, Sir Hyacinth, trated my lady."

"At all events Lady Blake could end that annoyance at once, by communicating Bodkin's impertinence to Sir Hyacinth."

"I am tould she would have done that same, only for fear Sir Hycie and the cap-

tain would have fought a jewel. My lady would almost put up wid anything to keep clear of bloodshed."

"It is a pity they don't fight," thought I; "the death of either would be a public benefit; and, if *both* fell, why the country should light bonfires."

The reader must not blame me too harshly for entertaining so unchristian a sentiment. It was the vice of the time, rather than my own individual fault; for popular opinion at that period—and, alas! even down to the present*—ranked duelling among the feats which were perfectly indispensable to give character and reputation to an Irish gentleman. I myself have been engaged, either as principal or accessory, in no less than seventeen of those delirious encounters. My years, however, have brought with them wisdom—at least in that respect.

Arrived at the brakes, we were speedily surrounded by a tribe of gossoons who

* The manuscript is dated 1783.

helped us to beat for hares. Unluckily, we did not see a single hare; which was to some extent accounted for by the information that a party, consisting of Julius Blake, Jack Walsh, Captain Bodkin, and some others, had been coursing there for several hours, and with good success. After rambling over the hills till six o'clock, I suddenly came up with the party.

"Halloo, O'Carroll!" cried Jack Walsh, who was the first to recognize me, and who promptly descried the failure of my day's sport, "you are a formidable Nimrod, I perceive. You will soon depopulate these brakes of hares at this rate."

I laughed at his banter, and as the whole coterie, including myself, were a little tired, we sat down on a grassy bank. For the first time in my life I looked at Bodkin with interest; a disagreeable species of interest, no doubt—but not, therefore, the less strong. He was a tall, handsome man, with good features, a rather sinister expression, and very fierce whiskers. In

general somewhat silent, he was at intervals known to be communicative when in company with jovial friends, whose reminiscences excited him to colloquial rivalry in the detail of his own exploits. His age might be verging on forty; but although by profession a *roué* he was wonderfully well preserved. On the whole, if aided with corked eyebrows and moustache, his appearance would have beseemed a brigand of the very first pretensions. He was nearly related to some persons of distinction; amongst others, to the Dowager Vis countess Knockmaroon, a somewhat remarkable personage, who, although chiefly residing in Dublin, at rare and distant intervals made visits to her Connaught connexions.

"The day's sport has sharpened my appetite," said Julius Blake.

"And mine," added Bodkin, looking ravenous.

"And mine," said I.

"And mine"—"And mine"—echoed

two or three others of our group. Jack Walsh said nothing.

"Now, really, Walsh," said Julius, "you owe it to your reputation for Irish hospitality to ask us all to dinner. Here we are—a party of famine-stricken unfortunates. Your snug abode is within three or four fields of us. *Can* you answer it to your conscience to let us pass your door?"

"Really, my dear friends, I should be most happy—I am sure I need not say so" —("Indeed you need not!" murmured Julius in my ear, "for nobody will believe you;")—"but I must premise," continued the rueful Jack, "that I cannot promise you a good dinner, being totally ignorant what provision my housekeeper has in the citadel."

"Oh, say nothing at all about that," said Julius. "We are charitable, and will readily excuse all deficiencies—we know your wine is admirable, and that will make ample amends for deficient provision in other respects. Gentlemen, I beg to move that we all dine with Mr. Walsh."

"I beg to second that excellent motion," said Bodkin.

"Carried unanimously!" cried I. And away we all went, with a loud hurrah, to Jack's bachelor domicile; Jack himself expressing his gratification at our incursion, although his countenance did not harmonize with the language of welcome he deemed it indispensable to utter.

CHAPTER XV.

"With well-heap'd logs dissolve the cold,
And feed the genial hearth with fires;
Produce the wine, that makes us bold,
And sprightly wit and love inspires."
HORACE (*Dryden's Translation*).

HAVING thus successfully stormed the fortress, we were gathered round a snug fire in the parlour, whilst Mr. Walsh retired to confer with his housekeeper respecting the dinner to be extemporized for the unexpected visitors. When he had left the room, Bodkin said to Julius, "I am infinitely obliged to you, Blake, for compelling that stingy hunks to be hospitable for once in his life. He is always quite ready to insinuate his legs under every body else's mahogany; but never since his father died, (and that's ten years ago,) has he been known to ask man, woman, or child to dine, breakfast, or sup in

his house. He has first-rate wines—an enormous stock—old Walsh laid in a supply that would float the British navy the year before he died. We must not spare Jack's wines to-night, boys.

"He is not so bad as you say," replied Julius; "I know he hates giving dinner parties; but I have often known him ask a friend to a *tête-a-tête* dinner."

"He never asked *me*," growled Bodkin.

The month was March, and the dusks of an early spring evening were deepening into night, when we were summoned to the dining-room where Jack's impromptu feast was spread. We had, in truth, no reason to complain. There was a capital substantial dinner; plump, tender, fowl; juicy ham, and unexceptionable beef; flanked with decanters of admirable Madeira. It was quite evident that Jack was resolved, now that he had fairly got into the scrape, to treat his guests handsomely. We were all very hungry, and the viands vanished rapidly. Conversation was therefore suspended until the cloth was drawn;

when our host, who thriftily kept the key of his own wine cellar, went out, and soon returned, followed by the butler bearing a large cooper of claret. "This is fine wine," said Jack, "I trust, gentlemen, you will do it ample justice."

We all pronounced it to be the *beau ideal* of perfectionnated claret, and under its influence we soon became very talkative. Bodkin narrated a *row* he had got into on behalf of Bob Fitz Eustace, (in Bob's secular days) at a London gaming-house.

"We were playing whist," said the ex-captain, "with two *habitués* of the establishment—there were only four of us in the room; the sharpers won everything, and Bob was nearly cleaned out, when I discovered that the cards were doctored. I charged one of the fellows with the fact; he denied it, and struck me a violent blow, which I returned with interest. The two sharpers then set upon me, Bob remaining neutral, and leaving me to fight the battle single-handed against odds. In my own

defence, I seized with one hand a huge carving-knife that lay on a side-board, whilst with the other I snatched from the wall a large brass chandelier, with which I laid about me so vigorously that I soon had my brace of customers sprawling on their backs, with my right knee on the breast of one of them, and the point of the knife at the other blackguard's throat. I had work enough to keep them both down, for they made a desperate resistance. But after about half-an-hour's struggle they discovered that I was beginning to get violent, so they judged it prudent to lower sail. Bob, when he saw the gallant battle I was making for him, then roused himself out of his inactivity, and between us we kicked the rascals out of the house into the street."

"How did you spend the rest of the night?" asked Walsh.

"The presence of the reverend Julius Blake prevents me from entering into details. But when we got home to our

lodgings in Craven Street, at four in the morning, we found the knocker taken off the hall-door by the provident inmates, who did not choose to be roused from their slumbers by our knocking for admittance."

"Couldn't you ring?"

"Aye, so we might, till doomsday; for the household all slept in the attics, and couldn't hear the bell. So, for want of a better mode of challenging attention, Bob crossed the street, and thundered at the door of the opposite house, till the echoes could be heard beyond the Thames. A night-capped head was popped out of an upper window, and a surly voice demanded what we wanted at such an unreasonable hour. 'I beg I may not interrupt your slumbers,' said Bob, with infinite suavity; 'nothing could be farther from my wish; I only borrowed the use of your knocker to arouse the lethargic inhabitants of my lodgings over the way, as my knocker has been removed from

the door by some officious individual. Good night—pray don't disturb yourself.' And so saying, Bob again thundered away with redoubled vehemence, regardless of the vociferous curses of the man in the nightcap, who had got into a terrible passion. However, when the latter threatened to discharge some domestic missile at the head of the intruder, and had actually retired from the window for that purpose, Bob thought it high time to decamp, the more especially as he had now achieved the purpose of his *tintamarre*, by awakening the sulky matron of our domicile, who at last got up and opened the door for us."

"Was Fitz Eustace well supplied with money at that time?" asked Julius.

"Rather yes than no; but he was often run dry; as every one is who really enjoys London life. I have even known him pawn his watch upon a pinch."

"That was literally living upon *tick*," quoth Julius.

"The poor fellow did not economize his constitution," continued Bodkin, with the self-complacent air of a rigid moral censor. "I often told him how matters would be; but his health is undermined: in my opinion he is dying by inches."

"By inches?" repeated Julius; "then he will be a good while about it, for he stands six feet one without his shoes. Bodkin, I wonder that you, who can talk so morally, do not marry some of these days."

"So I would," returned the ex-captain, "only that (as the man in the play says) I never yet saw the woman upon whom I could conscientiously throw myself away. Don't spare the wine, my boy!" he whispered to me, as I once or twice pushed past the decanter untasted. He drank with inveterate assiduity himself, and encouraged us all to emulate his bibulous achievements. We speedily finished the first cooper of claret, and were deep in a second, which still further unlocked the sources of conviviality. Under

its genial influence Bodkin ventured to ask Julius whether there was any truth in a rumour he had heard, that Fitz Eustace was a suitor of Miss Emily Blake; and favoured, if not by the young lady herself, at least by Sir Hyacinth. I started, as if struck by a pistol-shot; my heart beat violently. Here was an explanation of Father Macnamara's obscure hints: I awaited with eagerness the answer of Julius. "He had heard," he said, "the rumour Captain Bodkin alluded to; but he was not prepared to say how far it was authentic."

"That is very diplomatic," said Bodkin, "but we all know the story is not very unlikely. Fitz Eustace has sown his wild oats, and has settled down into a staid, sober, curator of souls. He has very fair interest—that is, for an Irishman; and if he never had any, why his father is heir-presumptive to the earldom of Killeries, and its princely rental;"—("With princely incumbrances!" muttered our host)—"and

Sir Hyacinth," continued Bodkin, "might naturally think him worth encouraging, under all the circumstances."

"I know no more of the affair than you do," replied Julius; "I have certainly heard it spoken of; but neither by my niece nor Sir Hyacinth."

These words gave me hope. Captain Bodkin and the minor *convives* now became uproarious in their vinous merriment. The captain, exalted by wine above the ordinary forms of good-breeding, insisted on a third cooper of claret, in which requisition he was lustily joined by his satellites.

"Egad, Jack Walsh, we'll see it out, my man! It is not very often you give us an opportunity."

Walsh, who had hitherto borne our incursion with an excellent grace, now became testy. "I advise you gentlemen," said he, "to make the most of your time; for, if you don't, you must drink in the

dark: except those two ends of candle, there is not a morsel of light in the house."

"What? not another candle?" exclaimed Bodkin.

"Not one."

"Well, then, we will make these go as far as we can," said Bodkin, extinguishing one of the candles. "One candle at a time. An old campaigner is accustomed to economy. Let me echo our worthy host's advice—hiccup—make the best of your time."

Bodkin's economical management of the candle-ends saw our party into day-light. Julius Blake had retired about midnight; but I was induced by a resistless fascination to see the scene to an end. Bodkin proposed the health of Lady Blake with a vociferous eulogy of her personal charms. He swore "she was a fine woman—a d—d fine woman! Although she is verging upon forty—hiccup—she is not much the worse for the wear. She is infinitely handsomer than many a woman of twenty."

The toast was honoured as its subject deserved. Walsh's cellar was well mulcted. It had to sustain the assaults of seasoned bacchanals, who were impelled to outdo themselves on the present occasion by the very desperation of impudent waggery. They boozed until eight in the morning: Walsh, with bloodshot eye and haggard cheek, accompanied the staggering *convives* to the door, which, as he slammed it behind them, he "registered a vow in heaven" that they never should enter again. It was something like poetical justice that Bodkin was dead drunk. He was lifted out between two of his friends—for Walsh had ejected him, on the plea that fresh air would certainly revive him. It did not, however, produce that effect, so that his companions were obliged to carry him along with them; readmission to Walsh's domicile being utterly out of the question. This was no easy task for men whose limbs staggered under their own weight.

Not far from the end of Walsh's avenue

was the parish church of Ballymacslattery. The grated windows of the vault were temptingly near the road. The iron bars were rusted and decayed, and a very slight exertion was sufficient to remove them. The body of the insensible bacchanal was introduced through this window into the charnel vault, and quietly deposited at full length on the top of a coffin. There we left him, to awaken at his perfect leisure. Notwithstanding the cruelty of the trick, I must own that I did not recoil from participating in its perpetration; for the dislike I had always felt towards Bodkin was increased by what I had that day heard respecting him. The compassionate reader must not, however, imagine that our victim received any violent nervous shock on discovering his sepulchral sojourn. I charitably sent Jerry Brien, about noon, to watch the body of the captain. Jerry stole into the vault by the same mode of ingress we had used, and took his post beneath the shadow of an arch. I do not exactly remember how long he waited before the

drunken slumberer revived. When, however, Bodkin stirred, opened his eyes, and looked around upon the bones and coffins dimly revealed by the faint, clouded light that struggled into the vault, it was quite plain that his mental consciousness had not yet returned. His first idea evidently was, that he was dead; and that the locality in which he found himself was perfectly appropriate to a defunct gentleman. With a truly philosophic adaptation to circumstances, he muttered, as he looked on the surrounding coffins, "I suppose I shall rise when the rest of them do!" And then quietly closing his eyes and folding his arms, he gave himself no further trouble about the matter. On receiving, however, an emphatic assurance from Jerry that he was not dead yet, he started up, more effectually roused himself, and as the fumes of intoxication gradually dissipated, he allowed Jerry to assist him from the vault; on emerging from which he was placed upon a low-backed car I had provided, and thence trundled home.

CHAPTER XVI.

"There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully on the confined deep;
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear."

King Lear.

THERE is a bold and lofty headland within the domain of Ballymore, running far into the sea, and guarding, in the sinuosities of its northern side, a small and beautiful bay. There is one spot only of the coast accessible to vessels of even light burden: a quay had been constructed there by a former proprietor of Ballymore; and the very narrow channel, safe for anchorage, was not at the period of which I write indicated by buoys or other sea-marks; so that mariners in approaching the quay were dependent for safety on their own

previous knowledge of the hidden rocks and shoals that encumbered the little harbour.

I had strolled to Ballymore for the purpose of visiting Lady Blake, with whom I was a considerable favourite. She was not in the house, nor was Emily: the footman said her ladyship was walking somewhere in the domain, and Miss Emily had ridden out. As he could not tell the exact destination of either, I took the direction of the headland I have described, as I knew it was a favourite resort of Miss Blake's.

I did not, however, meet her. But I met Julius, who was rambling alone along a path that wound among the rocky heights. His countenance appeared to me expressive of care and anxiety. He cheered up when I approached, and asked me what had occurred at Jack Walsh's hospitable board after he had quitted us. He was exceedingly amused at Captain Bodkin's catastrophe in the church vault; which vault, he said, seemed destined to

subserve a variety of purposes not contemplated by its pious founders. Bodkin had recently got surreptitious entrance there; and some years before, it had been used as a receptacle for smuggled goods by a former incumbent of the parish, who had a share in the venture. The mention of Bodkin recalled the story he had told of his achievements in the London gaming house; and that recalled the mention of FitzEustace.

"And what sort of person is FitzEustace?" asked I.

Julius looked at me with a scrutinizing eye. "Are you *very* anxious to know?" he demanded. I coloured under his keen and searching gaze. "Yes," continued he, laughing, "you *are*, no doubt, very anxious to hear a description of the person you are told is your rival with my niece."

I was silent. I was alike abashed and surprised at Mr. Blake's having hit upon the truth.

"And did you really suppose," continued he, "that your preference for Emily could escape *my* penetration?"

"All this banter," said I, "is not answering my question—I asked you to describe FitzEustace."

"Oh, FitzEustace is—is—a man of fashion—yet not quite that—he is at times something better; and if he had been better trained instead of being left to his own wild, wicked will from infancy, he might perhaps have been a credit to society."

"Has Mr. FitzEustace been lately at Ballymore?"

"Now, Maurice," said Julius, turning short round upon me, "I protest altogether against your sly, indirect queries. Cannot you come straight to the point, and ask me whether I have any new or authentic information about that gentleman's suit to Miss Blake? To answer the question, then, which you did *not* ask, but *would* have asked, had you dared, I may tell you at once that I had; and I can add that

Sir Hyacinth is fully resolved to give Fitz-Eustace the full support of his parental authority."

I was stunned by this intelligence, and faintly said, "You did not know this the other night, at Walsh's?"

"Not so fully as I do now; but the kindest advice I can give you, is to tell you to put Emily out of your head. Fitz-Eustace comes forward recommended by many advantages: he is the son of a rich, thrifty bishop, who, if he reach the ordinary term of episcopal life, will amass enormous wealth. He, moreover, may possibly be Earl of Killeries; the present earl, who is my second cousin, is likely to die an old bachelor, in which case the bishop will succeed to the title."

"But FitzEustace's personal character?" said I.

"Is not worse than that of most men going," returned Julius. "This is not an age of saints; the anomalous state of the laws (I should be tried for high-treason, I

suppose, were I known to say so) is destructive of Protestant morality. The laws have given Protestants *carte blanche* in their dealings with Papists. Men cannot bear irresponsible power; and when our ascendancy gentlemen are permitted to oppress, insult, spoliate, and hang the rest of the nation, with perfect impunity, we cannot at all wonder that our caste should be prolific in rascals. FitzEustace, I suppose, cannot have wholly escaped the social taint; but, if Emily marries him"—("Heaven forbid it!" thought I)—"he will probably improve under her angelic influence."

"So!" said I to myself, "notwithstanding your moral saws, Mr. Julius Blake, you look quite calmly on the sacrifice of your 'angelic' niece; your vanity being tickled by a possible coronet, and the certainty of wealth; although the suitor is reputed to be a prematurely worn-out *roué!*"

As I remained silent, Julius did not re-

new the topic; but he soon after asked me whether I had formed any plans for my own future course?

"Your father may live twenty years," said he.

"I am sure I hope he may!" ejaculated I.

"No offence intended to your filial piety; but, even should he die to-morrow, you would get nothing but the house, and about a thousand acres of indifferent moorland; of that your father is strict tenant for life; but the bulk of his estate is, I fear, irrecoverably dipped. If any scrap of it should ever reach your hands, it will scarcely be sufficient for the maintenance of your rank as a gentleman. I advise you to lose no time in choosing a profession. What think you of the bar?"

It seemed to me that Julius said this as a covert intimation of my unfitness as a suitor for Emily; I, however, followed his lead, and we talked away of future plans and prospects, until we had nearly reached the end of the promontory. The day had

been previously fine, but a violent shower of hail and sleet, that suddenly drifted from the hills, compelled us to take refuge in a watch-tower, perched upon the verge of a beetling precipice; thence we looked forth upon the storm—on the livid tinge that now overspread the waters of the bay; and the huge sheets of snow-white foam, which were dashed aloft as the sea chafed angrily against the rocks. The wind soon rose in fitful gusts, and the wild scream of the sea-fowl mingled with its voice.

"What a sudden change!" said I; "we were fortunate in being so near shelter."

A loud roll of thunder now broke along the mountains, and its echoes pealed through their recesses.

"Look! look!" cried Julius, "there's a vessel; she has rounded Ballyknock point—but what horrible steering! As I live, she will go to the bottom!"

I eagerly looked in the direction he indicated, and at once saw the cause of his

anxiety. A yacht was standing into the bay on the larboard tack, with the wind at N.N.E., coming in sharp squalls from the mountains. She was fairly staggering under the press of sail she carried; and as the puffs struck her, I could see her often lying over nearly on her beam-ends. To crown all, her head was continually falling wide off the wind, and then luffing again, manifestly from the mismanagement of a drunken pilot. It was clear that all this would end badly. She, however, managed to get pretty well down the bay, and, notwithstanding the lee-way from her bad steering, had yet room enough to weather the terrible Ballymore reef; after which, in a few minutes, she might have put away large, and so got safe to her anchorage—when down came a squall, as black as night, which struck her with tremendous fury at the most critical moment, the rocks being only a few fathom on her lee-beam, and her head a couple of points off the wind. I just caught a glimpse of

the unfortunate craft canting over, and then the driving shower hid all from sight for a few minutes.

"Good heaven!" cried Julius, "not a soul can escape! Yet let us, at all events, try if help be possible."

As he spoke, we rushed from the watch-tower; but from the perfectly impracticable nature of the ground, we were obliged to make a considerable *detour* before it was possible to reach the water's edge. The object of Julius was to get out a boat, and accordingly he went to seek the assistance of a fisherman, who lived in a sheltered hollow beneath the rocks. I made the best of my way to the point nearest to which I had seen the unfortunate craft overset; and, as I stood upon the slippery and uneven rock, the shower sufficiently cleared to enable me to see the wreck beating in fragments on its base. At first I could not discover if a single person survived; but I soon discerned two bodies on the surface of the water at some distance

from the shore, apparently rather drifting than swimming in the direction of the land. Without a moment's further delay, I threw off my clothes, and dashed into the waves, to assist at least one of the sufferers. Ere I reached them, one had sunk to rise no more; the other, nearly exhausted, was making a desperate struggle for life, which, however, he could scarcely have continued for five minutes longer if I had not promptly come to his aid. He convulsively clutched my right arm. I begged he would struggle no further, but quietly hold on, as the water would sustain his weight till we reached the slip, which was now not more than forty or fifty yards in advance. He obeyed my instructions, which, indeed, were indispensable to the preservation of both our lives. From childhood I had been a hardy swimmer, and I now buffeted the tide so lustily that I brought my rescued comrade to the slip just as Julius and the fisherman had got out the boat beneath the cottage of the

latter. They put out to pick up any stragglers who might have yet contrived to keep afloat; Julius indicating by a signal that he saw I had succeeded in preserving one of the ill-starred party.

Alone upon the slip with the stranger to whom I had rendered that important service, I could not help remarking his eminently aristocratic appearance. His age might be two or three-and-thirty; his figure rather slight, but well knit and elegantly formed. His features were extremely handsome. An expression of hauteur lurked in the curl of his upper lip and the glance of his dark blue eye; his hair, out of which the powder had been washed, was light brown; and the easy, careless grace of his attitudes seemed to indicate a person of the highest fashion. I was very much struck with his calm and disengaged manner, at a moment when most men would have exhibited some strong emotion. He seemed not at all more disconcerted by the peril from which

his life had so narrowly escaped than he might have been by the slight inconvenience of a passing shower. He paid his compliments to me with some warmth; but with a certain air which almost appeared to imply that he considered the expression of his thanks an act of condescension, to which, however, I had well entitled myself.

"You have placed me under the highest possible obligation, sir," said he, politely bowing, and then pressing my hand, "and I beg you will accept my best acknowledgments. Without your assistance I should probably, nay, certainly, have closed my connexion with this world. May I ask the name of my preserver?"

"Maurice O'Carroll, of Castle Carroll."

"Ah! I have heard the name—an ancient house."

"And may I ask," said I, "whom I have been so fortunate as to rescue?"

"My name is Robert FitzEustace," replied my dripping friend, "and I shall be

happy, if you will permit me, to have the honour of making your acquaintance."

I assented by a bow. I felt a choking sensation, but, with a vigorous exertion of magnanimity, I compelled myself *not* to regret that I had saved him, although he was Emily's suitor. As our ceremonious interchange of politeness took place under the frigifying influence of a hard shower, and as I had no covering but my wet shirt, I proposed our immediate adjournment to the cottage of the fisherman. Thither we accordingly repaired; and throwing off our saturated garments, we wrapped ourselves up in warm boat cloaks, and took our seats opposite a blazing fire. A gossoon brought my clothes from the rock on which I had thrown them, and whilst they were drying, FitzEustace informed me that the cause of the disaster was the intoxication of his pilot, coupled with the ignorance of the rest of his small crew, not one of whom was acquainted with the bay of Ballymore.

"They were a careless set," he said, "and should any of them have escaped, I shall not engage them again. I have lost my excellent yacht through their foolhardiness and drunkenness—two causes which, separately or combined, have lost many a good ship. Can you tell me," he added, "if Mr. Julius Blake is now at home?"

"He is at this moment boating about the bay, in the hope of rescuing some of your crew."

"A vain hope, I fancy: Julius will be rather surprised at the style of my arrival when he finds me here. The Blakes expected me a fortnight ago, and I then meant to come by Athlone."

In the course of an hour Julius entered the cottage, having failed in the attempt to save any of the yacht's crew. The loss of so many hapless beings made him gloomy; and there was not even a smile in the welcome with which he greeted FitzEustace when they met.

"Come," said he, "your clothes are now dried—it is very near dinner hour. Maurice, of course, you dine at Ballymore?"

I assented; being, in truth, curious to see how Emily would receive her admirer.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Here is a wounded knight, who craves your hospitality. Prithee don't refuse him, my good lord—he will not cumber you with many charges."

The Tower of Westhill.

When we arrived at the house, Sir Hyacinth Blake was flogging a footman, with whom he was in a towering passion, for having dared to ride after Miss Blake that morning with an ivory instead of a silver mounted horsewhip. The culprit was threatened with dismissal in case of his repeating an offence so derogatory to the splendour of the house of Ballymore. The appearance of FitzEustace turned the thoughts of the enraged baronet into a different channel. When he had greeted us civilly, we retired to our several apartments. We had changes of dress from the

wardrobe of Julius. The personal chattels of Mr. FitzEustace had all gone to the bottom of the bay, so that he lacked some of the advantages which his toilette, under happier circumstances, would have conferred upon him. Dinner had been just announced as we reached the house; we, however, entered the drawing-room before the ladies had left it; and it appeared to me that FitzEustace, in addressing himself to Emily, was watchful to discern how far his attentions were agreeable, with the purpose of bestowing upon her precisely so much of his notice as her taste might incline her to accept, and no more. Although he was perfectly polite, yet somehow I fancied that he considered his notice too valuable a commodity to be thrown away in any superfluous expenditure. Emily was the very reverse of *exigeante;* she was at all times satisfied with a very slight share of attention; and on the present occasion her manners were more reserved than usual.

Lady Blake inquired, with well-bred

concern, the particulars of FitzEustace's watery adventures. As he led her ladyship to the dining-room, he detailed his disaster in a few brief sentences; speaking in a tone of light sarcasm of the blundering stupidity of the drunken steersman and crew; "they ran the yacht," he said, "against the reef in your picturesque bay, and I had the fortune to be shipwrecked just in time for dinner."

There was in all this an air of great insensibility, that shocked good M'Grail, the vicar.

"Oh, my friend," said the elder clergyman, "God has signally favoured you in preserving you from the fate which your unhappy crew have met." M'Grail stopped—but his manner said, as plainly as if he had spoken the words, "And you seem very thankless for the mercy."

"Do not suppose," said FitzEustace, "that I could have wished those men to incur so severe a penalty for their criminal incompetence; although I must say they

are solely indebted to themselves for their fate—especially the pilot."

"That is not exactly what I meant," said honest M'Grail.

"Come, come," interposed Sir Hyacinth, "let us have no preaching—reserve yourself, my dear vicar, for the pulpit you adorn so highly. Pray say grace."

At dinner I sat at Emily's left hand—on her right was Fitz Eustace, who endeavoured to interest her by a description of some theatrical novelties in Dublin: his criticisms on the stars of the day were acute and discriminating. Emily listened, and seemed interested. M'Grail recurred to Mr. Fitz Eustace's escape. The latter, as if to correct an omission, spoke of the efficient aid I had given him. "Mr. O'Carroll," said he, "plunged in among the breakers and saved my life at the imminent risk of his own—it was a bold, prompt service, for which I have already assured him of my gratitude."

Emily said, in a low voice, "It was an

act of heroism;" and she looked at me with an approving smile that would have amply recompensed me for thrice the risk I had incurred, if it were not for the jealous doubt that her approbation was accorded to me rather for the sake of Fitz Eustace than for my own; rather in acknowledgment of my having preserved her favoured lover, than in token of her personal pride in the "heroism" I had been complimented for displaying.

Lady Blake's opinion was much more unequivocally given. In the course of the evening, she said to me—

"It is tolerably plain that you have done for our friend that which *he* never would have done for you, nor for anybody else."

"He has not been tried," said I.

"Oh, a fanfaron!" returned her ladyship; "I wonder how Sir Hyacinth can like him."

Miss Isabel Trench, who had been staying for some weeks at Ballymore, mono-

polized our host for the evening. Nobody was desirous to encroach on her monopoly; but there seemed a sad disregard of good taste in the engrossing manner with which both those dignitaries selected each other's society to the exclusion of the rest of the company. True, every word they spoke was in the ordinary tone of conversation: there was nothing approaching to a confidential dialogue. But, apparently abstracted by each other, there was an air of parade in their defiance of the ordinary rules of politeness, which must have been insultingly offensive to Lady Blake. Miss Trench at all times boasted her perfect independence on public opinion, and she acted in rigid accordance with her boast. Capable of assuming, when occasion required, manners even of imposing dignity, she also was capable, in the exuberance of her unchecked, unregulated spirits, of descending to practical jokes at the expense of any one to whom she had taken a pique. One of her jokes, not many weeks before,

had been played off on Julius, who, somehow, incurred her displeasure. Arriving to dine and sleep at the house of her brother, he had committed his steed to the care of the groom. Snow fell heavily during the night; and Miss Trench, through the agency of her *soubrette*, bribed the groom the next morning to lead forth the horse, saddled and bridled, ere his owner had risen, and to fasten him by the bridle to the stone balustrade in front of the house. The snow still descended thick and fast; so that the first sight that greeted Julius, on looking from his window, was his luckless steed, clothed with a frigid mantle, and apparently having sustained all the rigours of the previous night. Miss Trench enjoyed with great zest the indignant wrath expressed by Julius at the groom's supposed carelessness, and the fears he pathetically uttered lest his horse should catch a fever from exposure all night to the snow-storm. Julius subsequently discovered the unfeminine hoax,

and never cordially forgave the fair perpetrator. Sir Hyacinth, on the contrary, swore that she had infinite spirit and humour, and that he honoured her for quizzing such a slyboots.

She generally treated me with supercilious indifference; but I think I was the object of more definite dislike ever since the domestication of her relative, M'Ginty, at Castle Carroll. She probably imagined that we made substantial inroads on his well-filled purse, to the detriment of those persons (herself included) whose more peculiar spoil its contents should have been.

On one point Miss Trench was absurdly sensitive. Her father, the youngest son of a man of good family and high connexions, had been providentially bred an attorney, in which profession he amassed a fortune equalling that of the head of the house. The young lady, although sufficiently vain of her parent's wealth, was desirous to bury, if possible, in oblivion the mode of its acquisition. Her pretensions were of

the loftiest character; and it was a galling reflection that a scion of the ancient race of Trench should be indebted for his wealth to the democratic drudgery of attorneyship.

In the course of the evening she condescended to acknowledge my presence. Whether by purpose or accident, it generally happened that the topics of conversation she selected were anything but agreeable. In this particular she resembled Sir Hyacinth. She now pointed out, *sotto voce*, the deep, devoted admiration for Emily which she professed to discover in Fitz Eustace's manner, as he listened to some simple airs she was singing most enchantingly, accompanying herself on the harpsichord.

"She has a charming voice," said Miss Trench, "and sings pleasingly at all times; but I own I never heard her sing so divinely as now. It is quite equal to Catley's singing. We are indebted, I fancy, for its peculiar excellence to the inspira-

tion of Fitz Eustace's presence. Do not you think him very handsome?"

"Certainly."

"Ah! and he has so much the air *comme il faut*—there is a certain carelessness about him; but it is the carelessness of one so accustomed to please, that he feels that he cannot go wrong. If I have any discernment, he has already proved resistless in a certain quarter."

Every syllable she uttered gave me exquisite pain; and she spoke as if taking it for granted that I was a pleased and admiring spectator of Fitz Eustace's success. When the topic of his speedy triumph was exhausted, she suddenly said,—

"One should not forget one's relations —Pray how does your guest, my mad cousin, go on?"

"Much as usual," said I.

"But how is that?"

"Making himself exceedingly comfortable," answered I.

"Then heaven help you all! for I think

the full development of Mr. M'Ginty's comforts, render every other person in the establishment exceedingly *un*comfortable. I hope," she added, with marked emphasis, " that you all find him a *profitable* inmate."

Here was deliberate impertinence. I simply replied that I had not been consulted as to the terms of his residence at Castle Carroll.

" That is to say," she rejoined, " that you do not choose the ' secrets of the *prison* house,'" (with a mischievous accent on " prison.") I reddened, not relishing this unscrupulous allusion to my father's notorious embarrassments. Miss Trench was evidently getting into one of her unamiable moods, and I prepared to stand on the defensive.

" Does my cousin often lecture The O'Carroll on the merits of a prudent economy ?"

" I can't say ; I have not heard him."

" Poor Mr. M'Ginty's infirmity of in-

tellect must render him an invaluable acquisition to persons who profit by his liberality."

My fair friend was becoming quite savage.

"I believe he can take care of himself," said I, drily. "I have heard him say that ere now he has expelled designing persons from his house."

Miss Trench winced, but said with an air of indifference—

"How do *you* employ your time in general?"

"Unhappily I have got no beneficial employment. I while away my time in shooting, fishing, hunting, and boating."

"In other words," said she, "you are that most useful member of society, an idle gentleman. With *your* future prospects, I should much prefer taking a spade and digging in the fields, to such a life of unprofitable lounging."

"We improve in liberality," said I. "Your father, Miss Trench, would have charged me six-and-eight-pence for so

much good advice: *you* generously bestow it on me gratis."

"We improve in impertinence, I think," retorted the offended lady; but she was evidently disconcerted, and immediately left me, as if scorning to continue the altercation she had herself provoked. If the reader should censure my ill-bred retort, he must not only remember that I was very young, and may therefore plead inexperience, but also that I spoke under the irritated feeling of insulted pride and poverty. The beautiful virago resumed her seat at Sir Hyacinth's side, and remained in conversation with him for the rest of the evening.

Julius was devotedly attentive to Fitz Eustace. I could not help thinking that the patronage possibly derivable from the earl and the bishop had a place in his thoughts. Worthy M'Grail, too, treated Fitz Eustace with marvellous suavity. Although too conscientious to omit the admonition of which he conceived that gen-

tleman stood in need, yet he, too, was swayed by the potent influence of speculation on episcopal favour. Emily treated him with a species of passive politeness, from which it was impossible for me to draw any positive inferences with respect to the subject the nearest to my heart. If she really cherished his addresses, her maiden modesty would probably prevent her from more definitely indicating her satisfaction. If, on the contrary, his attentions displeased her, she was naturally too timid to exhibit her displeasure under the rigorous eye of her saturnine father. Alas! thought I, the possible Lord Killeries starts with fearful odds against the impoverished heir of Castle Carrol.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"A very hopeful young gentleman, my relation, who is to be called to the bar within a year and a half at farthest, told me that he had ever since I first mentioned duelling, turned his head that way."

The Tatler, No. 31.

MEANWHILE the state of affairs at Castle Carroll daily rendered my paternal home a more and more comfortless abode for me. On the one hand, my parents often twitted me with the sacrifice they made for my future advantage in consenting to the reduction of the annual sum paid by M'Ginty; whilst, on the other hand, M'Ginty assumed the most intolerable airs of domination in virtue of the "generous provision," as he called it, which he boasted of having secured for me. Paternal lectures, growlings, and complain-

ings, invariably ended with some taunt at the whelp for whose sake my sire was so much out of pocket. And M'Ginty seemed to think himself perfectly entitled to treat me with every species of capricious insolence. Between both, my condition was so pitiable that I kept as much away from home as possible. The families in our neighbourhood were always glad to see me at their tables; so that I commanded society enough, if my circumstances had permitted its enjoyment. Old habits, and his unfailing *bonhommie*, rendered the company of Julius a favourite resource. There was also in our intercourse the strong cementing bond of a certain similarity of condition. We were both dependent on our wits for a permanent provision. He had outrun his means; and by Sir Hyacinth's marriage settlement the Ballymore estate was limited to the issue whatsoever of his marriage; so that even in the event of the baronet's demise, Julius, although inheriting the

title, would not possess a single acre of the estate. Sir Hyacinth, at whose instance that settlement was made, was inclined to hate Emily for the rights she acquired by virtue of its operation; not, indeed, from the slightest desire to better the inheritance of Julius; but because it interfered with certain schemes and speculations that had recently begun to take possession of his brain. As for me, the reader knows that any hopes of a substantial succession in Castle Carroll were confined to the old mansion, and some hundred acres of bad land. My father at present maintained a defensive warfare with his creditors, who, notwithstanding successive decrees in their favour, were deterred for the present from renewing their efforts to enforce their rights, by the fear of a violent and formidable resistance; for the peasantry of a very large district would have gladly gathered round The O'Carroll, their feudal attachment to our family having survived his adoption of the

Protestant religion; and he also, in such an emergency, could confidently reckon on the active support of a phalanx of the neighbouring squirearchy, some of whom had *démêlees* of their own with the courts of exchequer and chancery, and would eagerly make common cause against the common enemy; whilst others would have deemed it an indelible stigma on the entire province that a gentleman of ancient blood, who had conformed to Protestantism, should be quietly victimized by sheriffs or their rascally officers; and others, again, whose ardent animal spirits delighted in a shindy, were certain to sustain The O'Carroll from the hot, strong, instinct that had ever sought occasions of pugnacious excitement. Thus fortified by public opinion without, and an ever-watchful guard upon the gates of the citadel within, my parent "held his own" against the law like a gallant gentleman.

It would, however, have been expecting quite too much, to imagine this could

always last; and although usage and necessity had reconciled my poor father to this wretched existence, I shrank from the notion of spending the best years of my life, a witness of the irritating and inglorious struggle. As for my prospects of Drumfeeny, Slievelacken, and Templemulligan—my eccentric friend, M'Ginty, was strong and healthy, and, for aught I could tell, he might perpetrate the additional eccentricity of living till he was a hundred. With respect to my mother's moiety—notwithstanding the efforts she made to practise thrift, I had reason to fear, from certain indications which occasionally reached me, that my father had induced her to encumber the lands for his benefit. What could I do? The sauntering life I had led was the worst possible preparation for any profession requiring energetic industry. There were law, physic, and divinity. I could not command money sufficient for the initiatory expenses of the bar. If I could have conquered this pecuniary diffi-

culty, it would have been the most inviting profession of any. Causes were frequently entrusted to counsel, less from their skill as lawyers than from their celebrity as duellists. Many a cause was successfully fought, or bullied through the courts, which might have halted sadly on its legal merits. I could hit a butterfly upon the wing at twenty yards; so that I had at least one qualification for the legal profession. I reflected that this was a merit that could not be available in either physic or divinity. Your pistol-bullet *in terrorem* might bring off a client with flying colours; but it would not be so easy to bully either Death, or the Arch-Enemy. I thought wistfully, therefore, of the bar, and heartily cursed the *res angustia domi* that placed so desirable a profession quite beyond my reach. The army sometimes glanced across my thoughts; but the total lack of interest and patronage seemed an insuperable barrier to my obtaining a commission without paying down the purchase money.

The crisis of my domestic misadventures occurred in the following manner. One day that M'Ginty had gone some twenty miles from home, my mother desired me to course with his greyhounds, our own being *hors de combat* from distemper. I at first refused to bring out the odd man's dogs, on the express plea that he had often imperatively forbidden that any person but himself should make use of them. My mother, however, pleaded the exigencies of the larder, and confidently undertook, should M'Ginty, on his return, discover that his dogs had been used, to make my excuse by taking the whole blame upon herself. Thus encouraged, I set out, accompanied, as usual, by my unfailing attendant, Jerry Brien. Our sport was good; and at nightfall we were re-entering the precincts of the domain at a ford we had just crossed on stepping stones, when we were startled by the sudden apparition of M'Ginty, who had unexpectedly returned, and who sprang

from behind a hawthorn, where he was lying in wait for me. His countenance and gestures were those of a demoniac; he foamed at the mouth, and demanded in a voice of thunder how I had dared to take his dogs, in defiance of his express and often-repeated prohibition. "It is a piece of daring insolence, you infernal vagabond!" exclaimed the maniac, "that demands satisfaction—and satisfaction, by Jove! I will have. Here's a pistol," he continued, thrusting one into my hand, and striding twelve paces to measure the ground, "We'll settle the business on the spot—short accounts make long friends. Take your ground, sir."

I confess, albeit my valour may suffer from the avowal, that I felt so very little stomach for the belligerent proposal of M'Ginty, as to create in my mind a passing doubt whether I should shine in the fighting department of the legal profession; but M'Ginty allowed no time for that or any other speculation.

"Take your ground, sir!" he bellowed ferociously, "or, by Jove! I'll shoot you through the head."

I was afraid to run away, lest the madman should fire at me; and, of course, I had no notion of accepting his challenge, if there were any possibility of evading it. He held his pistol levelled at me. In the access of his passion Jerry Brien had stolen behind him, unperceived, and snatched the pistol out of his hand; taking care, in his grasp, to point the barrel upwards. It went off; the ball passing over my head.

"Get home, you murdhering ould rascal!" exclaimed Jerry. "If you had hurt or harmed Masther Maurice, I'd have sent your sowl full gallop to *the Boy*."

The moment I saw M'Ginty disarmed, I recovered my presence of mind, and, levelling my pistol at that gentleman, I menaced him with instant death, unless he returned quietly and immediately to the house. The sense of his defenceless posi-

tion considerably tamed him; he stared at me fiercely for a moment, and then, suddenly turning about, he took to his heels and scampered in the direction of the house, with a speed that greatly increased my estimation of his agility.

I did not follow him. I sat down by the bank of the stream, ruminating on my embarrassments, in great bitterness of heart. I feared to re-enter my paternal roof; for I could have no security that my life was safe whilst M'Ginty continued to be our inmate. It is true that, had I desired his expulsion from the house, my father would have ordered him off without ceremony; but home had long ago lost all attractions for me. Should I remain there, I had no other prospect than to drag out the torturing existence of a gentleman-beggar. I felt that, sooner or later, I must shift for myself; and, probably, the sooner the better. The plaintive murmuring of the stream, as it swept past, seemed to echo the sadness of my thoughts. I had

sent Jerry Brien to the house with the pistols; and, on his return, he found me still seated on the bank.

"Won't your honour go home?" he asked; "this is a could place to be sitting."

"No, Jerry; my father's house is no longer a home for me."

"Yerra, why? Is it because of that cracked ould janius? Sure, what can be asier than to send the ould *behoonoch* about his business? Aye, indeed; *you* to quit your father's house, and lave *him* a fixture in it! Pretty pass the world would be come to, if that was law or raison?"

"No matter, Jerry, I cannot go there. I cannot explain to you all I feel—but to enter the doors this night I will not."

"Then what will you do? where will you go?"

"I know not, nor do I much care."

"Come to *my* bahawn," said Jerry; "if it was a palace I wouldn't count it too good for you—but you'll have a good fire, some sort of supper, a clane bed, and—oh! wisha—keadh, keadh mhile failte!"

"You are quite irresistible, Jerry. I'll go with you." And away we went; Jerry exulting in the honour of being my host, and I somewhat cheered by his hearty sympathy in the midst of my misfortunes.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Then Peace smiled on the peasant's cot,
And all was bliss beneath her rays;
O, why was not my humble lot
Cast in those happy, early days?"

ANONYMOUS.

THE distance to Jerry's cottage was about a couple of miles, the path lying chiefly along the river side. Night closed around us as we sauntered leisurely along. The cottage was nooked-in at the head of a small verdant hollow, among steep bosky banks, the upper verge of which stretched away into a wild extensive tract of moorland pasture. Jerry's wealth, like that of most of the farmers of the period, consisted more in cattle and sheep than in tillage. Yet of the latter there was sufficient to furnish his household with enough of oaten

bread every day in the year. His interest in the farm amounted to the maximum permitted by law to a Catholic; that is to say, one-third of the annual value. For the State was so timidly jealous of Catholic industry, that if Jerry had improved his farm to a nearer proportion to the rent, the first Protestant "Discoverer" who should inform the authorities of the fact, would thereupon be entitled to a share of the spoil; whilst the farmer, convicted of the crime of improving the land, should expiate his offence by the mulct of additional rent. Jerry, notwithstanding the legal penalty on agricultural enterprise, was comfortably off. There was an air of great coziness in the sheltered nook his cottage occupied. A channel had been cut all round it, and a natural fall from the front carried off the superfluous water. As we walked up the winding path that led to it, the bright gleams of firelight that flashed against the whitewashed wall of the kitchen, now visible through the

open door, gave cheerful promise of the comfort within. The sweet notes of "Savourneen Deelish," warbled by a rustic songstress, who plied her wheel upon the hearth, were heard ere we entered.

"That's my sister Eileesh," said Jerry; "she's always *tuning*."

Eileesh and her mother were much surprised at my becoming their guest for the night; but the instinct of natural politeness prevented them from expressing their wonder. It was nearly supper time, according to the hours observed in Jerry's family.

"Now," said my host, "your honour won't starve to-night, if you can make shift with oatcake, praties, new eggs, and milk."

"A man who could not feast upon those good things," I answered, "would well deserve to starve."

Eileesh added some excellent smoked salmon to our supper, which was washed down with punch, compounded of potteen

of the purest manufacture. While seated at our meal, I inquired of Jerry how Father Macnamara and Sir Hyacinth had settled the punctilio of Judy O'Shaughnessy's seat in the chapel.

"Judy has to cock up her ribbons at the door," he replied: "his raverence said that if Sir Hycie lit tar barrels undher the altar, the devil a one of her should come near it. But he got a good *mehul* for Sir Hycie, and I do suppose that softened him; so it's likely his honour will let the priest and Judy fight it out between them now, without interfaring any farther in the matter. They're a quare set, them O'Shaughnessys. That Judy's father was Diarmuidh-na-farriga—he that won the great bet about swimming from an Englishman, without being able to swim one stroke."

"How was that?"

"Yerra, did your honour never hear it? It was as cute a turn as ever was done. Diarmuidh had the braggingest tongue that

ever wagged in a man's head. If he heard tell of any great doings by any body, he could not rest asy without swearing that himself would bang the *haro* out and out, whoever he was. Well—there was an English footman once at Ballymore—as fine a swimmer as a Ballyshannon salmon. He 'd swim out of sight into the say, and come back in a couple of hours as fresh as if nothing had happened. One day he was boasting how far he could swim. 'I don't care how far it is,' says Diarmuidh, says he, 'for whatever it is, I'll double it.' 'Will you make a bet upon it?' says the Englishman. 'I will,' cries Diarmuidh, very stout entirely. 'Done for a goold guinea!' says the Englishman. 'Done!' says Diarmuidh. So the two shook hands upon it, and the neighbours wondered how Diarmuidh would get out of the bet, for they all knew he couldn't swim across a horse-pond; but they said nothing. 'Strip off!' says the Englishman, throwing off his clothes. 'Stop a bit,'

says Diarmuidh: 'Halloo, Padhre!' he calls out to his son, 'run home and bring me down the maulieen wid a couple of oat cakes and some could mate in it—I'll strap it acrass my back, for it's like we'll be swimming till night, and I might be hungry.' 'What's that you are saying?' says the Englisher, getting quite frightened. 'That we'll make a race in earnest of it,' answers Diarmuidh; 'I don't know how long we'll be on water, so I am victualling myself.' 'Oh, by gor, I won't swim against the likes of *you*,' says the Englisher, says he; 'we'll draw stakes if you plase.' 'Divil a bit,' says Diarmuidh; we'll see it out if *you* plase. Did'nt *I* say 'Done,' and didn't *you* say 'Done?' and isn't 'done' and 'done' as tight as a bond between two jintlemen?' 'Faix, it is'nt 'done' but *un*done I should be at this rate,' thinks the Englisher. 'Suppose now Mr. O'Shaughnessy,' says he, 'we swim for a petticlar distance—say a mile—or two miles—or to Carrigamurra and back—or

the likes of that'—'Bluranagers! is it child's play you want?' cries Diarmuidh mighty bould; 'why, I thought it was A MAN I had to dale wid!' So he frightened the Englisher out of swimming against him at all at all, and more by token he blustered him out of his guinea into the bargain, saying, 'If you are afeard to try, after shaking hands upon it, why your bet is lost all the same, honest man.' Ah, then O'Shaughnessys had ever and always the cuteness, along wid a good twist of roguery; and Miss Judy is her father's own daughter."

With tales such as these did Jerry cheat the time until supper was over; when, perceiving that I was silent and thoughtful, he ceased for a while to talk; Eileesh threw fresh *gewsh** upon the fire, which blazed and sparkled cheerily; the cottage was clean, and looked incomparably comfortable in the bright irradiation. Within

* Bog-wood.

doors was a scene of quiet happiness; without, the broad moon shone calmly over the rough and woody glen; the air was soft and still, and every branch and twig was distinctly visible in the clear silver light.

"There *is* happiness in this world of ours," thought I; "if one knew but how and where to lay one's hand upon it. How many materials for enjoyment are there not around us? But happiness is such a slippery leprechaun, that it eludes the grasp of the pursuer, unless he is more than ordinarily fortunate or dexterous."

"Unless he puts his trust in God," said Jerry gravely, answering the latter words, which I had uttered to myself half aloud.

"Are *you* happy, Jerry?"

"Troth! I am, sir; very happy. Things sometimes cross and thwart me; but, upon the whole, I've got great blessings to be thankful for. My bit of ground is well worth the rint; and your honour's father, in the middle of all his distresses, never

came tight upon me; Heaven bless him for that same. Myself, and my mother, and Eileesh, have got enough to eat and to wear; in short, sir, I have all that I was born to, or have any sort of right to expect; and, with the Lord's help," he continued, looking upwards, "when there's an end of this present life, I may hope to find marcy in the next. When that time comes, it will be aquil whether we were kings, lords, or tinkers in the kingdom of Connaught."

"And why is it, Jerry, that you are happy and I am not; you, with nothing but a cabin, and some fifty or sixty acres at a smart rent, whilst I, who must certainly inherit, if I live, a good old house and an estate, am eaten up with discontent and heartscald?"

"That's asily answered, your honour. It is because my state in life is suitable to my wishes and my rights. Not so to your honour. Your father has been pulling the devil by the tail for twenty years or more,

between lawsuits, and debts, and bum-bailiffs, and the like. What *I* wanted, and what I *ought* to have, I had it. What your honour ought to have, you had'n't it. What does it matter, that you wear better clothes, or eat better dinners than I do, when you're living on a scramble all the while? No, no; I can see the differ. What we think we have a right to, it's misery to be kept out of that. Your honour and I do not fret, because we aren't sitting on the throne of the three kingdoms; but, I'll go bail that that poor devil of a prince, that was beat by Billy the Butcher* at Culloden, is all the same as in purgatory, for no other raison than because he is kept out of the sate of his forefathers. Yet, wherever he is, he's richer and greater than either you or I."

"Would you turn out for Charles Edward," asked I, "if he came to Ireland for help?"

* The popular name, in Ireland, of the Duke of Cumberland.

"Not I!" answered Jerry. "We may thank his ould grandfather, Shamus, for the way we poor Catholics are trodden under foot. My shandheena* always tould me that the Boyne was lost through his Majesty's cowardice. Bad luck to him, for an ould rogue! the world knows that he and his blackguard brother used to favour the Cromwellians, and neglect their own true friends, that fought and bled, and lost their all for them. And it's for standing up for their good-for-nothing breed that we are scourged to this day as we are. Faith, Prince Charles must bring me some better credentials than his pedigree, before he can coax me to take a gun in my fist for him."

"Would you do nothing, Jerry, to have a king of your own religion?"

"It is nothing to me," replied Jerry, "where the king says his prayers, provided he doesn't punish *me* for saying

* "Progenitors"—Literally, "Old People."

mine where I like, myself. The world, to be sure, is down upon us just now—but with the help of God it won't be always so; and we'd hardly mend matters by running risks of the halter and the hangman."

"Well, Jerry, if you wouldn't fight for Prince Charles against King George, would you fight for King George against Prince Charles?"

"Not I. I've no raison to love either of them. If it comes to blows between 'em again, fight dog fight bear, says I. Whoever is winner or loser, I can't see what Ireland has to gain in the skrimmage."

After a pause, I walked out into the moonlight. Jerry accompanied me to the end of the glen, where a bohereen, or horse-track, ran along the moorland country that lay between his enclosure and the sea. It was such a beautiful night that I was tempted to enjoy an hour's ramble instead of going to bed. We strolled along in the direction of Cross-na-coppul, the embryo

village I mentioned in a former chapter; and I experienced the soothing influences of the hour, and of the tranquil spirit so strongly exemplified by my companion. To our right was a range of brown, heathy hills, stretching inland: the grey rocks that projected at intervals from their precipitous sides, shot up their fantastic forms into the white moonlight with a picturesque effect of light and shadow. When we had sauntered along as far as the hamlet, the sounds of revelry and laughter issuing from the little inn, broke at frequent intervals upon the stilness of the night; and the noisy chorus of a bacchanalian song, in which the voice of Bodkin predominated, apprized me that the party was composed of my jovial acquaintances. Louder and louder waxed the merry uproar, and as the words of the song were shouted by the gallant captain solo, it was evident that Venus had shared the poet's devotion with Bacchus.

"Why now, sir," said Jerry, as a very unequivocal stanza reached our ears, "if it

wasn't an offence to your honour, I'd ax you a question."

"No offence, Jerry—ask what you like."

"Then it's what I want to know, if them merry duine-wassels* that your honour consorts with, ever thinks there is a God above them at all at all?"

"Indeed, to own the truth, they think but very little on the subject."

"A fine life they'd have of it, sir, if it wasn't for the *sëal eile!*"†

"You wouldn't give much, then, Jerry, for their chance of salvation?"

"Salvation? Aillileu! who'd ever name Bodkin and salvation together? Why, now, if the captain ben't damned, where is the use of the devil?"

"You're uncharitable, Jerry."

"No—for I hope that he'll repint, and be saved. But, as he's going on just now, he seems to me to stand a poor chance. May the Lord turn his heart, though."

* "*Duinæ-uaish,*" Gentlemen.

† "*Séal eile,*"—the other world.

"Amen!" said a soft, melodious voice from the open doorway of the hostlery, beneath the steps of which we were at the moment loitering.

"Ah, Mr. Blake!" cried I, recognizing Julius; "Jerry thinks that some of our convivial friends stand in need of your clerical admonitions."

"Instead of staying to admonish," replied Julius, "I consulted my feelings by running away. Bodkin has been drinking hard, and is now in his altitudes—some few of us came down here to look at a couple of new hunters that were left for sale at Tim Molony's; a social mood came over us, and we dined together—but what brings you here at this hour of the night?"

In reply, I gave Julius a history of M'Ginty's recent outrage, and I stated the utter disgust I had taken to my father's roof.

"So you sought Jerry Brien's hospitality on the spur of your momentary irritation? Tut, tut! all folly and nonsense.

You should have stood your ground and routed the maniac, since he has become so unmanageable—"

"Believe me, I care but little for him or for his violence," said I. "But if he never existed, Castle Carroll is no fit abode for me. I feel degraded at wasting my existence among dogs and horses, and companions who, in general, have scarcely more rational intellect than the beasts of the field. I never have a shilling in my pocket—you know the way we live—can you wonder that I am madly impatient of my thraldom?"

Julius mused for a while. "We will talk of your affairs more at leisure," said he. "Meanwhile, as I really would not advise you to go back to-night to Castle Carroll, you shall come with me to Ballymore, and see Emily and FitzEustace billing and cooing like turtle-doves—" (I winced)—"Jerry Brien, my good fellow, go home to your mother, and good night to you—Mr. Maurice comes with me to Ballymore."

Jerry was about to utter a remonstrance, when his words were drowned in loud shouts of "Stole away! hoix, ho! stole away!" from the revellers, who, suddenly rushing from the parlour, would have dragged back Julius along with them, if he had not bolted without ceremony along the high road, and thus got beyond the reach of his pursuers. I accompanied him to Ballymore; the laughter of Bodkin and his discomfited companions ringing fainter and fainter in the distance.

CHAPTER XX.

Falstaff.—"I am bewitched with the rogue's company. If the rascal has not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged; it could not be else. I have drunk medicines."

Second Part of King Henry IV.

As we walked along, Julius said, "You and I are both idling away our invaluable time most unprofitably here. I know how you feel, and I partake your sentiments. Have you formed any project for your future career?"

"No. I have thought of twenty things; of the bar, the army, and the French brigade—of more crotchets than you would care to hear—and everything seemed beyond my reach."

"Have you any sort of patronage?" asked Julius; "any uncle, or granduncle, or cousin thrice removed, in a Government employment, or possessing any sort of Castle interest?"

"My mother's uncle, Colonel Crumpe, has a seat in Parliament, and haunts the Castle. I have often heard my mother say she thought he could befriend me, if he liked."

"And he does not like, I suppose—Was he ever asked? Does he often correspond with Madame O'Carroll?"

"No—except a stiff letter at Christmas and Easter, just to wish her the compliments of the season."

"You might try the old crust, however. There would, at least, be nothing lost by asking. Maurice, my boy! a new world is about to turn up in this kingdom. I can tell you that some of our magnates—the Ponsonbys and Beresfords, and others—are dissatisfied at the mode in which the English Government grasps everything for its minions, to the exclusion of the loyal Irish Protestants. They have already shown once or twice what a good opposition in the House of Commons can achieve; and they soon will make another rally, more

powerfully backed than ever; a rally that will teach the Castle that if it seeks to carry its measures, it must use Irish agents, and recompense them well.

"Very fine, indeed," said I; "but the scheme appears calculated rather to benefit its contrivers than the nation."

"What need you or I care for that, just now—provided that we can participate in its advantages? The opposition may begin by making terms for themselves—by and bye, if they're honest enough, they may be sufficiently strong to make terms for Ireland."

"I think they would have a better chance of success," said I, "if they made the latter terms first."

"Oh, well—we won't discuss that—I'll tell you a secret—his Majesty's life (I have it on the best authority) is not worth a twelvemonth's purchase. At any rate, he can't hold out three years. Then comes a general election—a grand scramble for seats, pensions, and places. I'll see if I

cannot either make myself either useful or ormidable—*l'un vaut bien l'autre*—to some great man in the interval. I can rough and tumble as well as the best of them; and you, too, might do worse than try whether you couldn't fasten a hook in some of those who will distribute good things. *Here* you never can do anything —Dublin is your ground. You must go to the metropolis; and I presume if your Colonel Crumpe does nothing else for you, he, at least, will give you bed and board for kindred sake."

"I hardly think he would," said I.

"Oh, you can't tell till you have tried. This country life will never make a man of you. Pity, indeed, you should waste your time listening to philosophy from Jerry Brien, obscenity from Bodkin, cynicism from Jack Walsh, and lectures on the art of keeping creditors at bay from The O'Carroll."

All this had a powerful and exciting effect on my mind. Confused visions of

future distinction were the airy offspring of a sanguine fancy. There lay some vast and busy world before me, as yet hidden, or, at best, but partially revealed, in which energy and enterprise were sure to win the guerdon of success. Then, with my honours thick upon me, to return in triumph to my Emily, and claim her hand—if, indeed, FitzEustace should not have made his own of her hand in the interim—ah! that was an ugly supposition. But Emily would wait, if she loved me as fondly as I once had flattered myself she did. The process by which I was to achieve sufficient wealth and honour to entitle me to aspire to her favour, was still undefined. I had a reckless confidence in fortune, backed by my own wakeful readiness to seize whatever opportunity of advancement might offer.

From these golden dreams I was recalled by a painful speculation as to the mode in which my travelling expenses were to be raised; Julius, however, in

some measure quieted my fears upon this point, by observing that the journey to town would not prove, after all, very expensive, if we distributed our stages so as to halt at the mansions of certain hospitable friends of his along the road.

When we reached Ballymore, the family were assembled in the drawing-room. Fitz-Eustace's manner to Emily was that of an established and authorized suitor; he paid her pretty compliments, and rendered her the thousand nameless *petits soins*, incidental to such a relation. I thought she seemed rather to tolerate his civilities than to enjoy them; and she actually took an opportunity, in the course of the night, to chide me, in her sweet whispered accents, for having been absent, for an entire fortnight, from Ballymore. Oh! there was comfort in that soft, low voice; there was delicious hope. My presence, then, was not quite indifferent to Emily; and when she spoke there was a slight tremor in the words, perceptible only to the ear of a

lover, that conveyed to my heart a thousand tender assurances of affectionate fidelity.

Miss Trench and Sir Hyacinth were playing picquet, *tête-a-tête;* Lady Blake, with a woebegone expression of confirmed resignation, looked on at the players from some distance, as she raised her eyes at intervals from Brooke's "Trial of the Catholics," which she held in her hand. Miss Trench won every trick, her opponent appearing perfectly enchanted with her skilful play. FitzEustace and Julius talked politics; and when the clock struck twelve, the signal for retiring to rest, I enjoyed the solitude of my dormitory after the active exercise, the exciting projects, and the various events of the day.

I was struck with the contrasts presented by the different abodes I had visited. In my father's castle there were mirth and misery; grim revelry and cankering discontent; remorse without penitence; the penalty of dissipation, without

the least purpose of amendment. The discomfort of the establishment was rendered grotesque by the presence of the jeering bedlamite, M'Ginty. Then I thought of Jerry Brien's cottage, where tranquillity and happiness had made their home, its owner and inmates, more fortunate than many of their class, having escaped political and social persecution. There was no ambition to disturb, there were no abortive struggles to molest, no pecuniary difficulties to embarrass the peaceful, humble, happy household.

I thought of Bodkin's godless merriment, and the hateful orgies of his fellow *convives*, which seemed to desecrate the holy silence of the calm, clear night. Then the magnificence of Ballymore, its stately halls, its crowd of liveried menials, its enchanting heiress, its sullen, uncongenial master. Here there were wealth and splendour; but there were schemes and projects incompatible with domestic enjoyment; there was no social confidence; for one

demon heart had cast its deadly spell on all around. Life was endured—not enjoyed—in the midst of luxury; happiness was blighted and withered. Moralizing on all these contrasts, I at length fell asleep beneath the drowsy influence of my ruminations.

CHAPTER XXI.

And then will canker sorrow eat her bud,
And chase the native beauty from her cheek;
And she will look as hollow as a ghost,
And dim and meagre as an ague fit;
And so she'll die. SHAKSPEARE.

NEXT day Lady Blake, Emily, Fitz Eustace, and I, were assembled, shortly after breakfast, in the drawing-room. Fitz Eustace, who was in a paradoxical mood, declared that, until the melody of Emily's voice reconciled him to vocal music, he had always preferred instrumental. Songs were absurd things; they aimed at expressing sentiment or passion, whereas, in real life, persons influenced by passion or by sentiment never set up a song about it. People who experienced actual joy, grief, pain, pleasure, love, or hatred, never dreamt of setting their sensations to music. "Now," continued he, laying his hand upon his heart, "I admire Miss Blake—if

she will permit me to say so—but would you not think me fit for a lunatic asylum, if I were suddenly to warble an amatory *ariette*, telling you the intensity of my passion *sforzando*, or trilling forth its gentler inspirations *andante grazioso ?*"

Sir Hyacinth was not present; and to his absence do I ascribe it that Emily found courage to reply, "I had rather your declarations were sung than spoken, for perhaps I might admire the music. At present," she emphatically added, "they have *nothing* to recommend them."

"How I wish I could sing, then!" said Fitz Eustace, not in the least disconcerted, "since melody might render my sentiments more acceptable. Perhaps," continued he, taking up an old volume of French songs, "I may find something here that may soften Miss Blake's obduracy."

"Perfectly impossible, I assure you," said Emily; "I am one of the most obdurate beings in existence."

"I must only hope, then," murmured

Fitz Eustace, with a kind of languid gallantry, "that the future may prove more propitious;" and he continued to turn over the leaves of the music-book, glancing at the names of the quaint old songs, which were chiefly of the period of Louis Quatorze. It was perfectly clear that however much he might admire Miss Blake, he was quite indifferent as to the feelings with which she regarded him. Secure of the influence of her stern father, the wooer evidently cared not whether her inclinations were outraged, provided she could be coerced by paternal authority to accept his hand.

Lady Blake did not seem to perceive what was passing. She was seated near a distant window, writing letters. A door at her end of the apartment opened, and Sir Hyacinth entered. As he approached her, she placed a sheet of blotting-paper over the epistle she had that instant directed.

"You seem to wish I should not see

that letter," said he, with a sort of grim pleasantry.

"*You* don't show me half your correspondence," she answered, with an air of gaiety, "and can you suppose I have no secrets of my own?"

With these words she attempted to lock up the epistle in her writing-box; but Sir Hyacinth by a sudden movement seized it; her ladyship snatched it from his grasp and threw it into the fire, where it was presently consumed, but not before her husband had seen that it was addressed to Captain Bodkin!

"Oho!" said the baronet, "so you correspond with that gentleman, madam? I suspected as much, before now. Your selection of a correspondent is creditable to your discretion. When Priest Macnamara hears this," he added, with a bitter sneer, "I hope he will approve the morality of his penitent—if, indeed, it's any news to his reverence, for he has probably officiated as your Pacolet himself."

Our presence was no check upon Sir Hyacinth, who, on the contrary, seemed to take a malignant satisfaction in mortifying and insulting his wife before witnesses. But Fitz Eustace was too well-bred to remain any longer a spectator of their altercation. He left the room, accompanied by me, and after we were gone the dispute was sustained with great acrimony. I am enabled, by information subsequently received, to record the angry dialogue:

"If you think, Sir Hyacinth," said Lady Blake, "that that letter contained aught inconsistent with your honour, you utterly and foully wrong me. But *you do not*, you *cannot* think it."

"O, no doubt I cannot think it," returned Sir Hyacinth. "Bodkin, we all know, is a saint; and a letter from a virtuous matron to a gentleman of such notorious and unimpeachable purity, must necessarily stand above suspicion. The topics of the correspondence, too, were so

sanctified, that the exemplary writer could not suffer her unworthy husband to have a peep at them. Pray, madam," he continued, "if I may presume to inquire, what *could* you write privately to Bodkin about?"

Lady Blake was silent for an instant. She then calmly replied, "I certainly owe it to myself to answer such an appeal, notwithstanding the insulting manner in which it is made. Mr. Bodkin had presumed to write me a letter, which—which—in short, which no man but a ruffian could address to a virtuous woman. The letter which I have now consumed peremptorily forbade him to visit Ballymore for the future, under the penalty of informing *you* of his infamy."

"And if this be so," inquired Sir Hyacinth, "why refuse to show me your incomparably virtuous epistle?"

"Simply because I desired to conceal from you an insult that I feared might provoke bloodshed. As God shall judge

me," she emphatically added, "you now know the whole truth."

"By —— I don't believe one word of it!" exclaimed the husband. "But the excuse does credit to the readiness and fertility of your genius. You took care, however, to burn the letter, that would have been evidence against you."

"Sir Hyacinth," exclaimed the lady, colouring with resentment and indignation, "this is perfectly intolerable. I cannot stay in your house an hour longer."

"No doubt you can easily procure more agreeable society elsewhere," sneered Sir Hyacinth.

Emily, who, in her father's presence was generally awed into silence, now indignantly broke through the restraints imposed by her usual timidity. With flashing eye and glowing cheek, she asked him how he dared to impeach her mother?

"How do *you* dare question *me*, insolent minion?" he furiously retorted.

"Because you insult me, sir, when you

offer such an outrage to my innocent mother," replied Emily firmly, and clinging to the arm of her trembling parent. "I know the lessons she has taught me, the example she has always given me. Sir, you are conscious in your heart that she is incapable of any deviation from rectitude. You dare not distrust her!"

"Be silent!" cried her father, with an oath, "or I'll make you repent your audacity. This is one of the lessons she has taught you, I suppose—to be insolent to your father."

"Do not provoke him, Emily," said Lady Blake. "I see he has taken his course. He wants to drive me from his house. He shall be gratified—and that without delay."

"Mamma," said Emily, "if you go, I go too."

"What? insolent again?" exclaimed Sir Hyacinth. "You do *not* go, unless with my permission. The doors are wide open for Lady Blake's exit as soon as she

pleases. But, mark me—*you* don't leave this house, except as the wife of Fitz Eustace."

"Do not answer him, love!" said Lady Blake, perceiving Emily about to reply; "I intreat you not to answer him—it causes needless irritation. Sir, I shall prepare for immediate departure."

Lady Blake was leaving the room, accompanied by Emily; but Sir Hyacinth desired his daughter to go to her own apartment—she hesitated—"Go at once!" he repeated in a voice of thunder, "go at once; or, by ——, you shall be dragged there."

Thus enjoined, the poor girl obeyed; and as soon as she found herself alone, she gave vent to a passionate burst of tears.

The reader is aware that I only witnessed the commencement of the scene I have described. It was not until some time afterwards that I received the details I have given.

CHAPTER XXII.

"———— Come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short moment gives me in her sight."
Romeo and Juliet.

THERE was a cottage on the skirts of a wild tract of woodland, some five or six miles from Ballymore, which Julius occasionally used as a shooting lodge. It belonged to our bachelor friend, Jack Walsh, and the accommodation was quite sufficient for a single person. Lady Blake, in default of a better abode, took up her temporary sojourn there, on the day of her *démêtée* with Sir Hyacinth.

It was a sylvan retreat of surpassing beauty, surrounded by sheltering oaks of enormous bulk and noble height, through whose huge horizontal branches were caught glimpses of the distant ocean, flashing and sparkling in the sunbeams. In front was a little lawn of the greenest ver-

dure, through which rushed a rapid mountain stream, that chafed and brawled over its pebbly channel. It was, in a word, a perfect paradise for a contemplative sportsman, who, like Mr. Walsh, combined a taste for philosophy, the picturesque, and whiskey-punch; and who, as he sat at the little parlour window imbibing the exhilarating beverage, could enjoy the wild scenery, and muse, in the fashion that best pleased him, on human events in general, and the sayings and doings of his neighbours in particular. The cottage was constructed of the rough grey stone of the country, with free stone quoins, architrave, and lintels. Age had coloured it with many a weather stain, and although possessing no architectural pretension whatever, yet, with the aid of a bold gable or two, and the sober tints that pervaded the edifice, it formed, on the whole, an attractive feature in the landscape.

Such was the abode in which Emily's mother now took up her residence; in-

duced, partly by its great seclusion, so congenial to her harassed spirits; and partly by the circumstance that she was still within reach of her daughter, who, she did not doubt, would occasionally find means to see her.

Notwithstanding the indignation Sir Hyacinth's conduct excited in my mind, I could not tear myself from Ballymore for the whole of that day. I lingered on the chance of again seeing Emily, who was well inclined to remain in her own apartment, and who pleaded illness as an excuse for doing so. But Sir Hyacinth admitted no excuse; and the poor girl, however loth, was forced to join the evening party. It was evident she had been weeping; the manner of Julius was judiciously soothing, as he took care to avoid the least parade of sympathy, at the same time that a single word, a look, a tone, disclosed to her his concern in her sufferings. Fitz Eustace had an instinctive feeling that any attentions he could show her would only inflict

torture; and as he did not wish to give pain for nothing, he considerately addressed his conversation to the other members of the party. Miss Trench, who had kept out of sight all day, now appeared, and was more than usually talkative and engrossing. Jack Walsh dropped in at dinner-time, and contributed some story of an otter and a salmon to the general amusement. Sir Hyacinth was *distrait* and abrupt, notwithstanding the conversation of Miss Trench; who, finding that her host was not as socially disposed as usual, turned her artillery on Jack Walsh, upon whom at supper she played off one of the odd practical jokes which had acquired for her a metropolitan celebrity. Jack, like many an old bachelor, was not a little vain of his personal charms. His dress was always scrupulously *à-la-mode:* his toupet was arranged on the best Parisian model, and his queue was the very sublimest of all conceivable queues. Upon this last appendage he was believed especially to

pique himself; and his treacherous friseur, unfaithful to the secrets of his toilette, had revealed to several customers that Jack's inimitable queue was artificial. No sooner had this rumour reached the ears of Miss Trench, than that lady provided a perfect *fac-simile* of Jack's queue, which, watchful of her opportunity, she always carried in her workbag. On this memorable evening she took his arm to the supper table, and when seated next him, she suddenly twitched his highly prized queue with one hand, whilst, with the other, she flung its "counterfeit presentment" on the plate before him. Jack's unavoidable impression was, that his sportive friend had denuded his head of its most valued ornament. His rage for a moment was excessive.

"If you were a man, madam," he exclaimed, "d—n me if I wouldn't call you out! But as you arn't," he continued, observing that the ludicrous expression of his fair assailant's countenance was re-

flected in the sympathetic looks of nearly all the company, "as you arn't, I must only take a different revenge;" and so saying he caught her round the waist, and imprinted some dozen vigorous kisses on her fair physiognomy. The lady disengaged herself from Jack's embrace, which she seemed inclined to resent, until Sir Hyacinth, who highly enjoyed the whole scene, assured her that she had given Jack a very unequivocal challenge, which he could not with any regard for his reputation have neglected to accept.

"It was quite an original expedient to obtain a kiss," said Julius.

"It was a much better one than Mrs. Lefanu's," said Fitz Eustace. "The other night she met Monsieur St. Eugene at my uncle's—'How I should like,' she whispered to Lord Killeries, 'to kiss that handsome Frenchman, if I could do so without attracting notice!' 'O! I can easily manage that,' replied his lordship. So, in order to gratify her whim, he pro-

posed a kissing round-robin; and as Monsieur sat next Mrs. Lefanu, the latter, in her turn, enjoyed the coveted happiness, which doubtless was much enhanced by the rapturous grimace with which the French fellow screwed up his mouth to perform the ceremony."

Poor Emily's countenance formed a sad contrast to the hilarity which now pervaded the *coterie*. Her thoughts were with her mother, and she listened with an absent and dejected air to the merry trivialities in which she took no part. It would have been mercy to leave her unmolested; but her father, possibly feeling her abstraction a reproof to himself, approached her, and sternly whispering, "Beware how you provoke me!" led her to the harpsichord, where she was compelled to perform several airs from the fashionable operas of the day, and to sing some of the bravuras in Artaxerxes. Her voice was naturally sweet and flexible, and had every advantage that the best instruction could impart:

but its plaintive tones betrayed the agony the effort cost her; and when she had concluded, she endured, with downcast head, some compliments paid her performance by Fitz Eustace and Jack Walsh, and then left the room for the night.

"Emily seems a little out of spirits," observed Miss Trench to Sir Hyacinth.

"A little stubborn and mulish, perhaps," muttered he. "Young ladies will sometimes require whip and spur."

Miss Trench tossed her head, as if indignantly rejecting, in *some* instances, the application of this very ungallant remark. The night sped apace—Jack Walsh took his leave, and the party soon separated.

The next day was Sunday. Emily was so ill that she could not leave her apartment, so that I had not the inducement of escorting her to church, to prevent me from returning to Castle Carroll after breakfast. I accordingly set forth with the intention of joining my mother at the parish church. My way lay by the Ca-

tholic chapel, at which the congregation were fast gathering. My mind required to be soothed; and no doubt the face of nature on a lovely April morning, and the train of reflections suggested by the sacred day, tended to calm the irritation and impatience excited by my own discomforts and those of persons who were dear to me.

There is something very beautiful in the Sunday's rest from labour, especially in the country. The carking toil of the week is laid aside for a short interval. Men are assembled to propitiate the Deity by the humble acknowledgment of their own unworthiness, and petitions for His mercy and forgiveness. The external face of things, also, has attractions for the thoughtful spectator. The various groups, dressed in their best array, approach from every side to the centre of parochial devotion. The light-limbed youths display their agility in bounding over all the ditches in their course; the elders advance less ambitiously along the beaten paths; and the

congregation await the arrival of the priest in the chapel enclosure, until at length the reverend man comes riding on his sleek, well-fed steed, which is fattened on eleemosynary corn. He wears a long *cota mhor*, sometimes of black cloth, sometimes of dark freize, in the ample pockets of which are deposited his breviary and missal.

Had the Irish priesthood been unfaithful to their trust, they could not have retained the powerful hold they possess on the affectionate reverence of the people. The older members of the congregation greeted Father Macnamara with a warmer feeling than that of mere respect; he returned their courtesy with an air of paternal affection.

As I passed onwards, in the direction of the Protestant church, leaving the Popish congregation behind me, the path led through a solitary vale, whose loneliness was enlivened with the carolling of birds, and cheered with the brightness of an April sun, that shone through soft, light,

flickering clouds. As I advanced through the valley, gay with the golden blossoms of the gorse, and fragrant with a thousand wild herbs, my spirits rose with the mingled influences of the holy hour, the quiet scene, and the sweet, invigorating spring-time. When I reached our church, the service had just commenced. M'Grail, who on that day did duty for our parson, was, as I have elsewhere said, an impressive reader; and his discourse, which was preached upon the solemn text, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity," harmonized singularly well with my emotions. But when the sermon was ended, and the blessing pronounced; when all the bows, curtseys, and other civilities had been duly and carefully apportioned to the precise pretensions of the persons on whom they were bestowed; when the proper measure of condescending notice was conferred upon some, and jealous heartburnings excited in others, by the partiality with which the parish magnates distributed their recognition; when, in

short, all had rushed again into the "vanity of vanities," whereof the utter nothingness had just been exposed by the preacher; the bustle had its natural effect in dispelling the impressions which the morning's sweet solitude and the excellent discourse had tended to produce in my mind.

This unpleasant transition of feeling was accelerated by the sight of our huntsman, Paddy Hennigan, outside the church gate, with thirteen couple of the Castle Carroll fox-hounds. My father, elated by his Sabbath emancipation from the durance of locked doors and grated windows, walked over to Hennigan, and asked him, "where was the bagged fox?"

"Taid M'Cabe has got him in the cow-lagh, down yonder, your honour."

"Well—we'll just wait till M'Grail is out of sight a bit, and then we'll let him out."

Accordingly, as soon as M'Grail had got to a proper distance, Reynard was unbagged, and given a fair start—the hounds were laid upon the scent—my father,

mounted on a thorough-bred hunter, careered away at full speed, hallooing, shouting, and cheering in his ecstacy, followed on foot by a noisy rabble rout, and on horseback by Bodkin and Jerry M'Ilroy. The hunt was a right good hunt; the fox gave several hours' excellent sport, and at last yielded up his knowing ghost amidst the triumphant baying of the pack in the lawn at Castle Carroll.

"Egad," said my father, as he marched magnificently into the house with the brush in his hand, "that *was* a famous burst. I should have died if I hadn't got a day's sport after such a cursed long abstinence."

"But on Sunday, sir?" I ventured to say.

"O, as to Sunday—if there is any sin in *that*, you cannot blame *me*, but the blackguard law that won't give us any other day."

The dinner table was graced with the presence of Bodkin; and as the reader is pretty well acquainted with that gentleman's qualities, he cannot wonder that I

man's qualities, he cannot wonder that I escaped from the dining room at the earliest possible moment. M'Ginty treated me with sullen indifference; a silent scowl was the only notice he vouchsafed to bestow upon me. My mother was closeted in her dormitory with some gossiping visitor. Destitute, therefore, of all companionship, I was consigned to my own resources for amusement. The evening proved rainy; and as I paced up and down the deserted drawing room, I felt the full force of the domestic tormentor, *ennui*. Down fell the rain in torrents; the evening shadows darkened gradually into night; overladen with the weariness and dulness of the mansion and its associations, I sank upon a chair in the window, the dreary silence only broken by the drearier plashing of the rain, and an occasional burst of distant laughter, or "hip! hurrah!" from the dining room. "Ghastly laughter! deadly merriment!" thought I. "Mirth and ruin—gleeful bankruptcy. What a house has my lot been cast in!" I yawned

fearfully, and dropped at last into a doze, from which I was disturbed by the entrance of lights, borne by old Martin, who busied himself laying the tea-things. My mother and her friend soon entered, much to my relief, and the rest of the evening was gossiped away pretty bearably.

The post arrived at the neighbouring town of —— two days in the week, and Sunday was one of them. The hour of its arrival was usually late; and just as the clock struck nine, the horn of our post-boy was winded in front of the mansion, and the letter-bag delivered to old Martin. It contained the Dublin newspapers, and one letter, which my mother regarded with some curiosity. The epistle was addressed to The O'Carroll, and bore the Sligo postmark. "I don't well know that hand," said Madame O'Carroll, reconnoitring the address, "and yet it is not quite strange to me, either. I think I am stupid not to know it."

Her companion took her turn of inspec-

tion, and promptly pronounced upon the case. "That's your sister-in-law, Mrs. Blake's handwriting, and the Sligo post-mark, too—she lives in some cottage near Sligo—does she not?"

"I cannot conceive what she writes to The O'Carroll about," said my mother, after again inspecting the outside of the letter. "She has not written a line to him these eighteen years or so; and I think, for my part, that he hardly remembers her existence."

I had scarcely ever heard my aunt Blake mentioned. I barely knew there was such a person, and that my father regarded her with aversion. She had never been at Castle Carroll since the time I was an infant.

So little did I know of that near relative, that I was not even aware she was a widow. I asked my mother was her husband "rich or poor?"

"He is dead these fifteen years," was the answer; "and during his life he had

nothing but what he and his wife could extract from your grandfather. The family lived on the spoils of Castle Carroll."

"Was he any relation to Sir Hyacinth?"

"Yes—he was one of the wide-spreading tribe—but not very nearly connected with him."

As we spoke, my father entered from the dining room; Bodkin had departed, and M'Ginty was gone to bed. The other guests went home, and The O'Carroll yawning, threw himself on a chair at the tea-table. My mother presented the newspapers to him; he pushed them aside, saying that he could not read small print by candle-light. She then tempted his curiosity with the letter, which he carelessly took, saying, "Some d—d dun, I suppose. But no—there's the Blake coat-of-arms on the seal."

And, without further deliberation, he opened the epistle and looked at the signature.

"Wheugh! this is from my precious

sister, Bess! Why, its a century, I think, since I heard from her. What the devil can she have to say to me?"

He proceeded to peruse the following letter, of which I faithfully transcribe the orthography:

"Kilcreena Cottage, nr Sligo,
30th March, 1759.

"Dr. Brother,

"So many years have passed without Intercourse betn us, that it is not impossible yr Widow'd Sister has long ago slipp'd out of yr Head. I write these few Lines to remind you that I exist, and to express a Hope that You and Yours are all well and prosperous. I wish I cou'd say that I and mine were so, but unhappily my poor, dear Blake (that's gone) left Things at 6's and 7's, so that I have found it a Hard Task to make Buckle and Tongue meet. I suppose my Nephew Maurice (whom I last saw when a sweet chubby Baby, at the Breast) hath shot up into a handsom young Man. He promis'd at that Time to have eminent good Looks,

and even in Infancy had an extraordinary Likeness to You. Give my Love and Blessing to him, and tell him that his Cozens here are anxious in their Inquirys after him. I hope the Younkers may hereafter be good Friends.

"Now, my Dr Br, I would have writ you long ago, to present my Love and Respects to yourself and my amiable Sister-in-Law, only that the Cares of my young and growing Family engross'd my Time, but not my Thoughts; for my Mind often turn'd to the Old House of Castle Carroll, and its worthy Inmates.

"Presuming you may feel desirous to know how we get on, I beg to acquaint you that my eldest son, Tom, has taken out his Degrees as M.D. at Edinboro' Colledge. He has been some Weeks with me, and shortly goes to settle in Dublin, where it is to be hoped his Genious and Abillity will speedily get him into good Practice. He is full of Tallent; and, as my Dr Deceas'd Husband was not

supposed to be very strong in the Atticks, we may infer that doctor Tom derives his Intelleck from our family.

"My younger Sons, Michael, Peter, and Henry, are fine handsom Fellows. Henry hath a great Look of our Grandfather's Portrait, at the End of the long Drawing Room. He is a true O'Carroll, and is quite wild to get into the Army, if a Commission c^d^ be obt^d^ for him, by Interest or otherwise. He is a brave, high-spirited Lad, and I venture to predict will do credit (sh^d^ he get a Commission) to himself, his Relations, and the honourable Profession of Arms.

"Michael is a steady Youth, and seems fitted for a Counting House, or some such plodding Business. I c^d^ get him well placed with Mac Swiggin and Comp^y^, Wine Merch^ts^, in Dublin, only that the fee they demand is a considerable stumbling-Block. A like Reason obstructs poor Henry's Entrance into the Army. My Son Peter hath not much of a Business Turn

about him; but his uncommon personal Beauty, conjoin'd with his good Birth and agreeable Manners, encourage a Hope that he may make (bye-and-bye) an advantageous Match. None of all 4 want Wit; but, in that Particular, doctor Tom bears the Bell from all his Brothers.

"It was with no small Trouble, and Paring and Scraping, that I contriv'd to give Tom a Profession. He is thus in a Manner provided for; and Nature hath (I think) bestow'd a Fortune (or the Making of One) on Peter in his personal Advantages. My Mind is now chiefly anxious about poor Michael and Henry; and after many scruples I have at last resolved to write to you (as being my brother in Affluence) to sollicit y^r Help for y^r 2 Nephews. It is not for Beggars to be Chusers, or for me to name a Sum; yet I'll venture to hint that a matter of £300 (or if that's not convenient, say £200) w^d remove all Difficulty, and confer an everlasting Obligation on your struggling sister.

"I beg my kind Love to Madame O'Carroll and Maurice, in wch I'm join'd by my Sons. Accept ye same for y^rself; and Believe me, D^r B^r, y^r very affectionate Sister, ELIZABETH BLAKE."

My father perused the above epistle with tolerable equanimity, although he gave vent to some contemptuous poohs and pshaws, until he arrived at the concluding paragraphs. "Brother in affluence, quotha! Confound her assurance! Well she knows how she and her rascally husband connoodled my father out of every farthing they could in any way lay hands upon. Well she knows how she would not leave her fortune in my hands, but made me pay down every shilling of her £3,000, although I had to borrow the money, and am still paying interest for it. She will thank me for £300, or, if I can't give her that, she will oblige me by accepting of £200, for the use of her beggarly whelps. Curse her impudence! If I

were rolling in gold I wouldn't give her sixpence, for I do not forget how she served me while the old man lived."

By my aunt's epistle, and my father's exclamatory comments thereupon, I learned that I had an intellectual cousin-german named Tom Blake; and that The O'Carroll had, much to his inconvenience, paid my aunt her fortune many years before. Both these facts were destined to be brought, ere long, more strongly under my notice.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Ho ça, Gil Blas, me dit-il un jour, le tems de ton enfance est passé. Tu as déjà dix-sept ans, et te voilá devenu habile garçon. Il faut songer á te pousser."

Les Avantures de Gil Blas.

NEXT day I announced to both my parents my intention of going to Dublin. They received the information with astonishment. My mother's affrighted fancy conjured up a thousand perils; and my father was unable to conceive how a man who was *at large* in the country, and who might hunt uninterrupted for the entire season, could wish to go to town. They both made several objections; and at last I was obliged to remonstrate seriously on the cheerless, hopeless prospect which a prolonged residence at Castle Carroll would present.

"I see nothing before me here," said I, "but an idle, unprofitable life. If I had

sufficient means to embrace some profession, I would do so. At all events, Dublin will afford me more occasions of pushing my fortune than I could possibly have in the country. I am anxious to try if Providence may not open some mode of retrieving this estate from its embarrassments. I am not unprovided with a Mentor," I added, "for Julius Blake is also going to town, and I shall have the benefit of his experience and advice."

My father hid his face in his hands, and seemed much affected. At last he said—

"God prosper you, my poor boy—you are willing to repair, if you can, the mischiefs—I fear irreparable—that I have inflicted on your prospects. It is well to have Julius to advise you at a pinch—a knowing shot is Julius, and he means very well, I dare say. I heartily wish I could send you forth into the world in a style beseeming your ancient birth and just pretensions. As it is, I cannot give you a guinea—for I may truly say, as I once heard M'Grail say in the pulpit, 'Silver

and gold I have none, but I'll give you what I have'—and that is a pair of tip-top duelling pistols, my boy, and your father's blessing along with them. They are feather-springs, and I am confident that I put them into worthy hands. It has pleased Providence that you should be an excellent shot, and I feel certain that the honour of our house will not suffer in your keeping."

Overcome with emotion, my father rose to get the pistols, which, in their neat mahogany case, reposed in his cabinet. When he placed them in my hands, he said in an emphatic manner, "Never accept a slight from any man breathing. These are the lads" (touching the weapons as he spoke) "that will bring a refractory customer to his senses. Look, my son, at these six notches on the handle of this one—every notch commemorates the death of some troublesome fellow. Two of them I winged in midsummer, and the wounds mortified—one of them I shot through the thorax, one through the lungs, and two through the heart. I thought I should have kept

these pistols as long as I lived—but I feel it a solemn duty, as you are now going out into the world, my dear son, to bestow them upon you. Take them, my boy, and may Heaven guide and prosper you in the use of them. Remember"—(and his voice faltered with emotion as he spoke the words)—" remember that when I shall be gathered to my fathers *you* will be then The O'Carroll."

I received the pistols and the appeal with becoming solemnity. My mother told me privately that she had twenty guineas at my service. She desired me to fear God; to say my prayers; to eschew all evil company, and to write to her as often as I could get franks; which, as parliament was now sitting, she presumed could be procured daily for some time to come. She promised to give me an introductory letter to her uncle, old Colonel Crumpe; he was stingy and selfish, it was true; but "blood was thicker than water," and the colonel might not only ask me now and then to dinner, but (if I could ingratiate myself in

his affections, a worse than doubtful proviso)—he might possibly advance me in life, as he was a constant guest at Dublin Castle, and "ploughed the half acre"* indefatigably.

I said nothing to either of my parents on the subject of M'Ginty's outrage on the night he detected my having coursed with his greyhounds, although that incident had a powerful effect in accelerating my departure from home.

In about a week I visited Lady Blake at her sylvan retreat, to bid her farewell. I was extremely grieved at the change which so short a period had made in her appearance. Her husband's conduct preyed incessantly upon her spirits; and her health, which had long been undermined, now rapidly gave way. When I told her I was going to Dublin, she congratulated me on being for a while emancipated from the *desagrémens* of Castle Carroll. "There are dangers no doubt," said she, "in the

* "Ploughed the half-acre"—Haunted the precincts of the Castle.

metropolis; but there are also dangers in the country. There will be few perils in your path greater than intimacy with such unprincipled persons as Mr. Bodkin, and too many of the companions you have often familiarly met. The only safeguard in every temptation, in every trial, is religion. Follow its precepts—practice its observances. You cannot *go* to heaven, unless you are *fit* for heaven. Seek for the grace whereby alone you can become so; seek it by earnest prayer. 'Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, when the evil days come not.' "

The affectionate emphasis with which the speaker uttered these words, impressed me solemnly and deeply. Yet I could not but smile, as I remembered the solemn exhortation, so dissimilar from Lady Blake's! with which my father had accompanied his parting gift. Whilst I thought of the contrast, the door opened, and I was equally delighted and surprised by the entrance of Emily. It was evident, too, that our rencontre gratified her. She had come to

visit her mother without asking Sir Hyacinth's permission, which she feared would have been refused. Lady Blake embraced her with tenderness. "But I am afraid, my love," said she, "your papa will be *very* angry, when he discovers you came here."

"If I incur his anger," said Emily, "in the performance of duty, I shall of course regret it. But what sort of daughter should I be, if that, or any other apprehension, prevented me from coming to mamma?"

Her tones thrilled with emotion, and set my heart in a wild whirl. She kissed her mother's forehead as she spoke: poor Lady Blake could only utter, "My child! my dearest child!" but those few words spoke volumes: they told the consolation derived by the outraged wife from the filial duty and unfaltering confidence of her daughter; they told the mother's knowledge, that however persecuted and insulted, she had still an untainted sanctuary, a holy refuge, in the heart of her

child. There was a silence—an eloquent silence of some moments, for the indulgence of feelings that could not find utterance; and as I necessarily felt my presence a check on this intercourse, I retired to the little lawn in front of the cottage. I had not been there half an hour, when Emily came out. She had her bonnet on, and we strolled down the banks of the brook together.

"Mamma says you are going to leave the country," were her first words.

"Yes; and your uncle Julius will accompany me."

"Indeed! I am sorry for that. Ballymore will be very disagreeable without him."

I tremulously said, "You have Mr. FitzEustace there."

"Unhappily we have," she answered. "I heartily wish he were anywhere else."

"Many young ladies would think otherwise. Pray how has he been so unfortunate as to displease you?"

"That is a question your own observa-

tion might have spared you the trouble of asking. I have no particular dislike to Mr. FitzEustace, as an ordinary acquaintance. But you must have seen that—that he took an ungenerous advantage of papa's support to press attentions which he knew were unwelcome."

"Then they *are* unwelcome!" cried I. "O, Emily! I cannot tell you the delight with which I hear you make that avowal!

Emily blushed deeply, and made no reply.

"Yet I know not why I should say so," I resumed. "If the accomplished heir to a coronet finds no favour in your eyes, it would be too presumptuous to expect that the impoverished inheritor of a decaying house—an adventurer—almost an outcast—should be more fortunate."

Emily was still silent; and, as we walked along, her eyes were bent on the ground. At length she said, in a voice of silvery softness, "*Why* should such an expectation be considered presumptuous?"

"Because the poor adventurer," said I,

" has his fortune still to make. His career lies yet before him—he has given no proofs of the soul within him—he has not any right to expect that Miss Blake should esteem him more highly than the crowd of other guests whom Sir Hyacinth's hospitality gathers round his table."

" He has already risked his life," returned Emily, " to save that of one, who is scarcely capable of gratitude for the benefit —he has ever shunned the senseless excesses which foolish custom renders prevalent. Should he realize in his future career the promise he has already made"—

She abruptly paused, as if fearing she had said too much.

" O, Emily! finish the sentence—If he *should* redeem the promise your partiality ascribes to him"—

" If he should," she resumed, in accents sweet and low, " then he need not fear that any maiden who values truth, fidelity, and courage, will consider his addresses presumptuous."

" What an incitement to honest energy!"

thought I. But I spoke not—I caught her unresisting hand, and pressed it to my heart. The path led past a hollow in the rocky hill; some rude, moss-grown stones formed a natural seat, on which we rested ourselves; and ere we had been there five minutes, our mutual affections were sealed with mutual pledges of constancy.

"You must not suppose," said Emily, "that I have not the sanction of at least one parent in my sentiments towards you. My mother values moral qualities more than the trappings of great wealth or high rank; and she thinks that her daughter's happiness may, at some future time, be safely confided to your keeping."

"She is not mistaken," I fervently exclaimed; "may God bless her for her generous confidence."

"Alas!" said Emily, "my poor mother's condition makes me truly wretched. It is hard, very hard, to be compelled to censure a father; but *you* have seen—*you* know how unjust, how harsh, how groundless was the pretext for his insults."

As she spoke, we were hailed by a voice from the opposite side of the brook. It was Jerry Brien's—he had called at the cottage to present its occupant with a noble spring salmon he had caught, weighing, as he proudly boasted, thirteen pounds.

"It isn't that her ladyship cares for the value of the fish," he took an opportunity to whisper to me; "but it must comfort the poor sowl to see that the hearts of the people are along with her, in spite of that ould Bluebeard, Sir Hycie."

Jerry had now been sent by Lady Blake to desire we might take some refreshment. When, in the course of the evening, Emily returned to Ballymore, I escorted her the greater part of the way, and then proceeded to Castle Carroll, in order to complete the preparations for my journey on the morrow. A large dinner-party were assembled to celebrate the departure of the heir on his first visit to the metropolis. The evening was spent in the ordinary intellectual mode, diversified only with deep and frequent bumpers to my success, prosperity, and so

forth. My father, inspired by the occasion, even essayed to make a speech: but as the oratorical experiment was not attempted until after unusually copious libations, I am sorry to relate that it was rather a failure.

When we were breaking up for the night, M'Ginty suddenly grasped my hand, saying, "Come, youngster, forgive and forget. You may meet many smoother tongued fellows than I am—but my heart is a sterling article."

Jack Walsh bade me a significant adieu. "You go with Julius?" he said to me, aside.

"I do, sir."

"Well—mind your weather eye, my lad. If you don't, the Reverend will gammon you. Adieu!"

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